DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 386 837	EC 304 226
AUTHOR	Parsons, Jane
TITLE	The Answer Book: Job Search Strategies for Students with Disabilities.
INSTITUTION	Arrowhead Community Colleges, Virginia, MN.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	30 Sep 94
NOTE	155p.; In: EASE Project: Equal Access for Students to Education and Experience. Final Report; see EC 304 225.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Accessibility (for Disabled); Access to Education; Career Planning; College Students; Community Colleges; *Disabilities; *Education Work Relationship; Employment; Employment Interviews; *Equal Opportunities (Jobs); Higher Education; Job Application; *Job Search Methods; Personal Autonomy; Resumes (Personal); Transitional Programs
IDENTIFIERS	Americans with Disabilities Act 1990; Minnesota (Northeast)

ABSTRACT

This manual on job search strategies for students with disabilities was developed as part of the EASE (Equal Access for Students to Education and Experience) Project at seven community colleges in northeastern Minnesota. The manual contains text, questionnaires, worksheets, checklists, examples, and lists of suggested resources to help students plan their careers, find possible jobs, apply for jobs, and then succeed on the job. Individual chapters focus on the following topics: (1) career planning, (2) rights and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, (3) identifying functional limitations and appropriate accommodations needed, (4) organizing a job search, (5) skill sheets to identify accomplishments, (6) the job application process, (7) writing the resume, (8) the job interview, (9) making employer contacts and networking, (10) using the telephone to make and keep contacts, (11) marketing concepts for marketing oneself, (12) sources of information for seeking a job, (13) self-advocacy skills, and (14) survival on the job. A final chapter contains 17 references and suggested readings. (DB)

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THE ANSWER BOOK

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JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

EC 304226

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IN
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EASE PROJECT

Equal Access for Students to Education and Experience

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MANY, MANY THANKS TO PAT STERLE FOR HER GREAT JOB SEARCH SKILLS INFORMATION

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LAST BUT NEVER LEAST, SPECIAL THANKS TO JOHN PARSONS FOR HIS WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS AND HELPFUL INFORMATION.

JANE PARSONS M.S.

FOREWORD

Most of the information contained in this manual would apply to any student. If you are looking for work, you must have a resume, know how to fill out an application and interview effectively. In order to do that, you need to identify your skills and abilities and network extensively. However, there are certainly special issues for students with disabilities who are ready to seek employment. Not only are there issues specific to their situation, they also need to be even more capable and knowledgeable than the non-disabled student. I certainly wish society was more receptive to believing in and acknowledging abilities in spite of a perceived handicap. The reality is - there is discrimination - and if job seekers with disabilities are to overcome this discrimination; they need to be sharper, more together and keenly aware of the issues with which they are faced.

This manual can be used in several different ways. It can be given in its entirety to a job seeker, it can be copied in sections as needed, or it can be used as a reference point for discussions with the student. The manual is not intended for re-sale.

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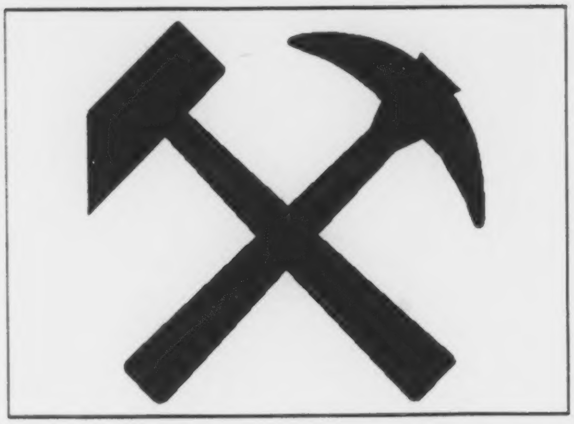
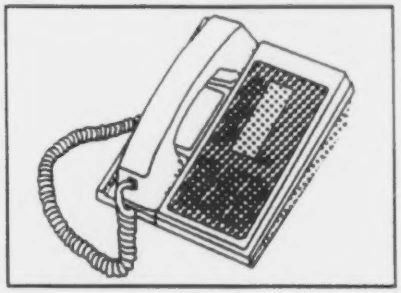
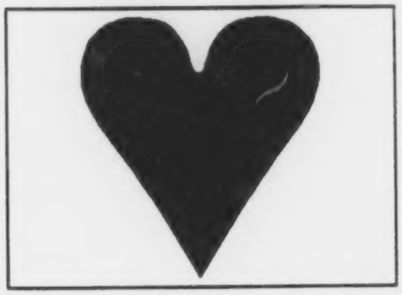
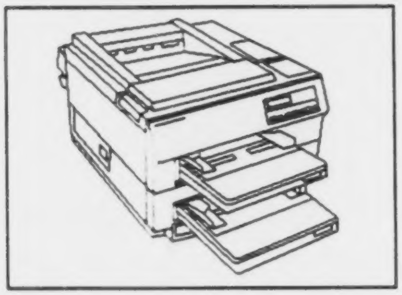
CAREER

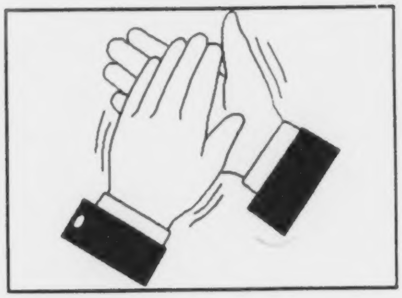
PLANNING











CAREER PLANNING

WHERE SHOULD I START?

When starting to plan a career you have several options. Maybe you completed some career planning in high school. This may have been enough information for you to decide about career goals. Then again, you may still need more time and information to make this major decision.

Community colleges or the continuing education division of a four-year college or university may offer excellent and comprehensive career planning courses. A "good" course will offer a blend of inspiration and introspection with occupational and job market information.

You may want to pursue career planning individually. For this purpose several self-directed inventories are included in this manual. There are other career tests that may offer further valuable information.

These tests include:

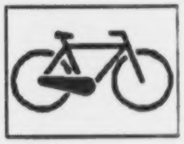
Career Occupational Preference System - an interest-inventory test developed to measure job activity preferences leading to 14 career clusters
Career Ability Placement System - a multi-dimensional test measuring aptitudes and abilities geared to entry requirements for many jobs
Self Directed Search - surveys aptitudes and interests to match with occupations in six work styles
Strong interest survey - compares interests with those of people successfully employed in a variety of occupations
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator - measures personality types and interests based on Jung's theory of 16 types
Harrington-O'Shea Career Decision Making System - a measure of career interest that combines abilities and values with extensive interpretive information
Campbell Interest and Skill Survey - compares interests and skills with those of people in general and people who are successfully employed in designated occupations

A rehabilitation counselor, community college counselor or continuing education program may provide access to these tests.

.OOC 8

So, where to start is up to you. Career planning is a process, not a test. One test will not answer all your questions, nor will it point you irrevocably on a particular career path. Tests can offer valuable clues about your thoughts and ideas and match them with relevant career options. Exploration of the job market in which you are interested is equally important, as is networking, realistic goal planning, discussions with career counselors and others, and assessment of long-term commitment to this job goal. Where you start is not nearly as important as the fact that you start at all.

TYPES OF CAREER TESTS



INTEREST

These tests identify your preferences. What do you like? What do you dislike? What do you want to do? Your answers are compared with groups of people, those working in a field and in some cases those working in a particular job. For example, if you like independent work, you will be matched with occupations that require independent work such as chemist or writer.

There are no right or wrong answers. The test only tells what you like to do. The test does not tell what you are good at or what you most likely will be able to do.

APTITUDE

These tests measure whether you have the potential to do the work, not if you are interested in the job. An aptitude is a readiness to acquire a given skill or to master a particular subject.
An aptitude is not an ability. When you have acquired an ability or a skill, you have developed a level of expertise in that activity.

Again, a profile of your answers is compared with people currently working in that field. For example, if you demonstrate a strong aptitude for working with mathematical concepts, you would match up with occupations that emphasize mathematical aptitude.

INTEREST SURVEY

Put a check beside the item only if you are interested in that activity, function or career field. Do not consider if you could currently do that activity, only if you are interested in it.

___IDENTIFYING NEEDS
___SWIMMING
___FORESTRY
___ART
___CUTTING COSTS
___CONSULTING
___CHANGING SYSTEMS
___PHYSICAL WORK
___CREATING THINGS
___MAKING DECISIONS
___TAKING RISKS
___MEDICAL SCIENCE
___POLITICS
___SELLING
___BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
___DESIGNING
___PUBLIC SERVICE
___RESOLVING CONFLICT
___INFLUENCING
___WINNING
___SINGING
___MUSIC
___MACHINE OPERATION
___MACHINE REPAIR
___OFFICE MANAGEMENT
___CLOTHING DESIGN
___WORKING OUTDOORS
___PUBLIC SPEAKING
___DEMONSTRATING
___RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES
___PROBLEM SOLVING
___PHOTOGRAPHY
___WORKING WITH CHILDREN
___OWNING A STORE
___MAKING MOVIES

___PERFORMING
___INVENTING
___ANIMALS
___BUILDING MORALE
___DECORATING
___LAW
___WRITING
___CREATING IDEAS
___MOTIVATING
___REPAIRING
___CLERICAL WORK
___GOVERNMENT
___ADVISING
___SERVICE
___DETAIL
___DEVELOPING
___INVESTIGATING
___EVALUATING
___COORDINATING
___THINKING
___RACING
___GRAPHIC ARTS
___COMMUNICATION
___COOKING
___TRANSLATING
___RAISING FUNDS
___BRAINSTORMING
___GUIDING
___ENTERTAINING
___LIBRARIES
___SOCIAL WORK
___PLANNING
___GARDENING
___MILITARY
___SUPERVISING

___ORGANIZING
___HEALTH
___ARCHITECTURE
___BIOLOGY
___ANALYZING DATA
___PUBLISHING
___INSTALLING
___ASSISTING
___BUILDING
___RESEARCHING
___TEAMWORK
___COUNSELING
___INTERPRETING
___CHALLENGE
___EDITING
___PROMOTING
___ACTING
___COACHING
___LANGUAGES
___APPRAISING
___READING
___PHILOSOPHY
___ASSEMBLING
___MINISTRY
___TEACHING
___COMPUTERS
___ENGINEERING
___CRAFTS
___ANALYZING
___TRAVELING
___PRODUCTION
___AGRICULTURE
___MONEY
___FINANCE
___STRATEGY

SCHOOL SUBJECTS

WHAT I LIKE	WHAT I DISLIKE

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

WHAT I LIKE	WHAT I DISLIKE

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

WHAT I LIKE	WHAT I DISLIKE

CIVIC ACTIVITIES

WHAT I LIKE	WHAT I DISLIKE

WORK EXPERIENCE

WHAT I LIKE	WHAT I DISLIKE

MY TOP TEN INTERESTS

Which of these interests are your very favorite? Which do you find yourself engaging in on a regular basis? These very favorite interests are your clue to a future satisfying career.

VALUES

One of the most important factors in the momentous decision on what you will do for work is the identification of your values. Do your values match your interests? Do your values match the work involved in a particular career? Many students have been disappointed when they find their chosen career involves long hours (no family time) or does not pay a large salary (no out of town vacations).

There are several ways to explore your values. One way is to prioritize a list of values. This will tell you how you think about your values, but may or may not indicate how you actually live them.

Another way of looking at values is to look at the things you own. List your possessions and prioritize the most important ones. What would you be sure to grab if your house was on fire?

One more method of exploring values involves examining the choices you have already made. Why did you attend college? Was it to advance your career? Was it to learn new things? Was it for status or to meet the expectations of others?

When exploring your values it is often helpful to look at where the value comes from. Many values are learned in childhood and not all of these have been evaluated when you reach adulthood. Values do not truly belong to you until their importance has been assessed and you have accepted them as your own.

VALUES EXPLORATION

1. What are some major decisions you have made that have had happy outcomes for you?
2. What is the ideal version of what you are going to do with your life?
3. What would you be willing to die for?
4. List the kinds of activities on which you have spent a considerable amount of time.
5. What have you spent most of your money on?
6. If you could be doing anything you wanted, what would you be doing?
7. What is your favorite activity?
8. Give the history of your favorite hobby or leisure-time activity.
9. What goals do you set for your life?
10. List and describe the important people in your life.
11. Describe your philosophy of life.
12. Of the values that you received from your family, which have you accepted and which have you rejected?
13. What do you consider to be your potential in life?
14. What kind of person will you be ten years from now?
15. What would be an ideal vacation for you?

VALUES EVALUATION CHART

Rate the items on the list below from one to five with one being the lowest and five being the highest.

CREATIVITY ______________________ 1 2 3 4 5
Being inventive - discovering,
developing new things, etc.

RECOGNITION ______________________ 1 2 3 4 5
Being looked up to - recognized,
respected, etc.

HELPING OTHERS ______________________ 1 2 3 4 5
Helping people live more satisfying
lives.

ECONOMIC SECURITY ______________________ 1 2 3 4 5
Working in a job where layoffs are
rare or it is easy to find a job.

WORKING WITH PEOPLE ______________________ 1 2 3 4 5
Dealing with the public or performing
work tasks together with others.

VARIETY ______________________ 1 2 3 4 5
Doing many different tasks or working
in varied surroundings.

INDEPENDENCE ______________________ 1 2 3 4 5
Working at your own pace and/or
without supervision.

RESPONSIBILITY ______________________ 1 2 3 4 5
Planning work for yourself and/or
others, being accountable for the
success of your work.

HIGH WAGES ______________________ 1 2 3 4 5
Making a better than average income
once you are established in a career.

LOCATION ______________________ 1 2 3 4 5
Wanting to live in a particular place.

APTITUDES

Aptitudes can be measured by looking at the things you enjoy doing, are good at and learn easily. The chances are great that these are things for which you have an aptitude. For example, if you are good at playing an instrument, you probably have an "ear" for music and a natural aptitude in this area.

List your favorite subjects in school that you also received good grades in:

List you favorite activities that you possess a high level of skill in:

List the qualities and/or skills necessary for performing these subjects and activities well:

Since life is a process of learning about ourselves, chances are you will continue to develop aptitudes as you try new activities. Often people posses aptitudes they are unaware of until they try an activity. So leave room for growth in this portrait of your aptitudes.

PERSONALITY

One of the most popular personality tests is the Meyers Briggs Type Inventory. This test reports on your personality style or preferences in four areas. There is no right or wrong way to be, there are preferences that influence your choices in your personal life and career. It is interesting to identify these preferences not only for choosing a career, but also to highlight the differences among people. It can be hard for people to understand each other at times and knowing some of the ways we are all different can improve our understanding.

The first scale describing these differences is the Extravert/Introvert scale. You may get your energy from being close to people, or you may need time alone to re-energize. People who are extroverts tend to focus their attention outward toward people. People who are introverts tend to like to focus more on their inner world. They may enjoy people, but still need alone time to process events.

The second scale describes people's orientation toward Sensing/Intuition. If you fall into the sensing area, you appreciate realism and practicality. You use your senses to understand the world and acquire information. If you fall into the intuition area, you like to go beyond what you can know with your senses. You value imagination and creativity over being realistic.

The third scale (Thinking/Feeling) looks at how you make decisions. If you prefer analyzing objective information before you come to a decision, you probably are a "thinker". "Thinkers" like to have all the evidence, and use logic to weigh it, before making a decision. If you prefer making decisions based on person-centered values, you are a "feeler". "Feelers" do not insist a choice be logical. They analyze a decision based on how much they are willing to invest in it. Decisions are made according to personal value systems of themselves and/or others.

The last scale has to do with Judgement and Perception. Judgement in this case does not have to do with being judgmental in the way we usually interpret the word. It does have to do with preferring a structured, organized environment. If this scale describes you, when you take some unstructured time, this is planned "unstructuredness". You like to know what will happen and when. If you prefer perception however, you like things unplanned and unstructured. You like to adapt to things as they happen rather than plan carefully in advance.

JOHN L. HOLLAND'S THEORIES

Holland's theories are used extensively in career counseling to match individual's personal orientations to job families. Holland identifies six categories or job families that can be used to describe jobs. Your personal orientation can then be matched with the broad categories and with individual's who hold jobs in each category.

1. **REALISTIC** If you like this group of jobs you value physical and concrete work. You probably see yourself as possessing good mechanical skills and enjoying work that involves using your hands. You want to see an end product that is obvious and visible.

2. **INVESTIGATIVE** If you like this group of jobs you like to solve problems or puzzles. You would enjoy environments where you could use diagnostic, investigative or research skills. You are not only curious about the way the world works, you are also willing to invest the time to analyze the situation and come up with a solution.

3. **ARTISTIC** If you perceive yourself as imaginative and expressive you would probably enjoy work that falls into the artistic category. These are careers where you are performing "right brain" activities such as painting, drawing, acting, writing, etc. There are some areas you may not think of as artistic that require large amounts of creativity and are in this category like radio/television announcer, chef and fashion designer.

4. **SOCIAL** This orientation reflects a desire to be in occupations that involve educating and/or helping people. If you like jobs in this category, you like to help people in settings such as classrooms, hospitals, counseling centers, churches, social services and community service agencies.

5. **ENTERPRISING** This group of jobs is attractive to people who see themselves as leaders with a sociable and friendly character. Common settings include courtrooms, political arenas, corporate offices and small businesses. If you like jobs in this area, you like taking risks in order to gain personal power, recognition or achieve a goal.

6. **CONVENTIONAL** If you like work in this area, you prefer jobs that involve concrete tasks. You may work in settings like financial institutions and business offices performing work that requires an orderly and systematic approach. An IRS agent is a good example of a job in the conventional category.

IF YOU WISH TO INVESTIGATE PERSONALITY TESTS FURTHER, SEE YOUR COMMUNITY COLLEGE, REHABILITATION, OR OTHER AGENCY COUNSELOR.

MAKING DECISIONS AND SETTING GOALS

Introduction:

Making a decision can be a difficult process. It involves taking a risk and this can be threatening if the risk is high and the outcome important. Your family, friends, counselors and others will have input into the decisions that you make, but ultimately they are your decisions.

There are several steps to making a decision. First, you need to explore and categorize all the pieces of input from others. What advice are you hearing and why? The second step is to examine your feelings about the decision. How important is this decision to you? How are you feeling about making a decision on this topic? The more important the decision, the more time, thought and effort you need to spend on it. Once you have made a decision, you must set goals and define objectives so you can make your decision a reality. The best decision in the world will amount to nothing if you don't devise plans to do it.

DECISION MAKING AND FEELINGS

Take a few minutes to think about the decision you are considering. Write down as many words as you can to describe your feelings about making this decision.

Look at the words. How many express positive feelings? Negative feelings?

Positive:

Negative:

Because making a decision is a risk taking behavior, some level of anxiety is frequently present. It is important to evaluate your level of anxiety so you can identify to what extent you are blocked from making a decision. Think about how you feel about this decision and rank yourself below.

☐ Overwhelmed with anxiety
☐ Nervous, yet able to cope
☐ Excited, anxious to move on
☐ Confident that I will choose well
☐ Relaxed and casual

If your level of anxiety is high, seek help with the decision. The higher the level of anxiety, the more time and care required to make the decision. However, this does not mean that you don't have to make a decision. Not making the decision means you've decided to do nothing. Remember, nothing is accomplished without risk. When the decision is important (such as what to do for a career), it's helpful to follow certain steps in your decision making process.

GOAL SETTING

There are two different types of goals, short-term goals and long-term goals. All goal setting needs to include concrete objectives that can be used to measure progress toward the goal.

1. **Be Concrete** The more concretely you can define your goal, the more likely you are to achieve success.

   Example Instead of....I want to be an artist
   Say.....I want to start my art career as a graphic artist working for a newspaper doing advertising layout in Denver.

2. **Plan of Action**
   *Look first at the most direct route to your goal.
   *Brainstorm alternative approaches.
   *List the requirements and potential road blocks of each of the choices.
   *Choose the one that is best for you.

Assess Be sure you have the motivation, time, resources, skills and strength to achieve your chosen goal.
Identify the reasons to strive for this goal. For example, making a list of all the health benefits derived from quitting smoking.

3. **Objectives** Once you have chosen your goal, it is time to break it down into measurable objectives.
This allows you to accomplish steady progress toward your goal without being overwhelmed.
Be as specific as possible when writing the objectives.

Example I will first write to the advertising departments of all the newspapers in Denver and I will include my resume and a request for an informational interview (explained in the section on job search skills).

4. **Plan for Obstacles**
Look ahead for possible obstacles.
Brainstorm solutions before the obstacles arise. Devise techniques for conquering any and all obstacles.
Be flexible, willing to change and take risks.

5. **Make Your Goal a Reality**
Write out the goal, make it concrete.
Share your goal with others who can help.
Give yourself enough time.
Keep on track - stick with it.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

THE ADA

The Americans With Disabilities Act was passed in 1990 and the employment section (Title I) took effect on July 26, 1992. It is essential that job seekers with disabilities are familiar with their rights under this new legislation, since the intent of the law is to protect against discrimination in all areas of employment. Title I of the ADA prohibits employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in all aspects of applying for and retaining a job. It also provides protection so the individual can participate equally in the benefits of employment. Understanding your rights under the ADA may help to remove barriers to your employment based on disability.

TITLE I: SUMMARY

No employer covered by the ADA may discriminate "against a qualified individual with a disability because of the disability of such individual in regard to job application procedures, the hiring, advancement, or discharge of employees, employee compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment".

The employer may require certain standards, tests and selection criteria if these requirements can be shown to be job related and consistent with business necessity.

This act does not cover individuals who are currently using illegal drugs or alcohol.

Charges of employment discrimination on the basis of disability after the dates of implementation of the ADA may be filed at any field office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

TITLE I: EXPLANATION OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Who must comply with Title I?

Employers with 25 or more employees were covered by the ADA starting in July of 1992 while employers with 15 or more employees will be covered beginning July 26, 1994. Obviously this doesn't cover all the employers out there, but you don't have to be a very large employer to have 15 employees.

The number of employees counted includes part-time employees who worked 20 or more calendar weeks in the preceding or current year. In addition, the definition of employer includes people who conduct business for the employers such as managers or agencies connected with the business. Therefore the employer is responsible for actions of these people or agencies that may violate the law.

Who is Protected by Title I of the ADA?

The ADA prohibits discrimination against "qualified individuals with disabilities". This term describes people who are able to meet the skill, experience, education and other job related requirements of a position held or desired. These are people who, with or without reasonable accommodations, can perform the essential functions of a job. In order to fully understand this statement, the term "individual with disability" needs to be further defined and essential functions of a job described.

A person with a disability is someone who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of his/her major life activities;
- has a record of such impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

Sometimes it is necessary to identify the essential functions of a job in order to ascertain whether or not an individual with a disability is "qualified" to perform that job. The first consideration in determining these functions is whether the employee currently doing the job is required to perform these tasks or functions.

If the person holding a job does perform these functions, the next question is whether removing that function would fundamentally change the job.

There are several key factors in discussing these issues with employers. First of all, know the job you are applying for. Look up the job in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (available in any library). Talk with someone who does that job before you apply for it yourself. Ask for a written job description. Though this may or may not accurately reflect what is currently being done on the job, it will in most cases provide historical information on what tasks and outcomes are expected. You need to know how you will accomplish the expected outcomes, if you will need accommodation, and what those accommodations will entail.

The ADA does not limit an employer's ability to establish or change the content, nature, or functions of a job. It is the employer's province to establish what a job is, and what functions are required to perform it. The trick, at times, is in the proper identification of what the job is. The employers may have outdated job descriptions. The employer may have no job descriptions. A rehabilitation professional may be able to conduct a job analysis to aid in the definition of the job. Job analysis focuses on the purpose of the job. It also looks at the importance of specific functions to achieve the purpose. Job analysis may include such factors as: the type of movement done, the frequency and weight of objects lifted or moved, the extent of repetitive movements, the working conditions, etc. Before requesting a job analysis, you need to do some research on the position - read the job description, ask someone who is currently employed in the job and/or check the job description in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Ask about a job analysis if you are still unsure about your ability to do the job or are unable to convince the employer of your competence.

THE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION OBLIGATION

The ADA requires that employers make reasonable accommodations.

* An employer needs to provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified applicant or employee with a disability unless it can show that the accommodation would present an undue hardship.

* Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job, an employment practice or the work environment that makes it possible for the qualified individual with a disability to perform a job.

* This obligation applies to all aspects of employment. The obligation is ongoing.

* The employer cannot deny an individual access to a job because of the need to provide an accommodation unless it would cause an undue hardship.

* It is your responsibility to request an accommodation.

* You must be qualified for the position and able to perform the essential functions of the job with the accommodations in order for the employer to be obligated to provide them.

* If it would present an undue hardship for the employer to provide the accommodation, you should be allowed to provide the accommodation yourself.

THE IMPACT OF THE ADA ON YOUR JOB SEARCH

What do you as the job applicant need to know about the ADA? There are some basic ideas it is good to keep in mind.

1. The employer is trying to decide who would be the best person for the job. If you don't make it clear to the employer that you can do the job, they won't hire you, ADA or no ADA.

2. The ADA does offer some protection during the application and interview process. The employer can only ask you questions that relate to your ability to perform the job in question. You may be faced with the question of whether or not to disclose your disability. If you choose to disclose, when would be a good time? This question is explored in the following section.

3. If you are qualified to do the job for which you are applying, the employer with 15 or more employees is required to make reasonable accommodations. If you are applying at an organization that generates a substantial amount of profit or has large resources, the accommodations they are required to provide could be quite extensive. Smaller organizations, or those that have few resources, may not be required to pay for expensive accommodations. If you know you will need accommodations that require a large outlay of funds, you will be better off seeking out larger organizations.

WHEN TO DISCLOSE YOUR DISABILITY

On the application

- * You are not required to disclose your disability on the application or provide medical records, unless the nature of the job is such that they are required of all applicants.
- * The disadvantages of disclosing on the application usually out weigh the advantages. You might be disqualified from a position without having the opportunity to explain how you could perform the job.

During an interview

- * This format allows you the opportunity to explain simply and positively the ramifications your disability would have in that particular work setting.
- * If you will need accommodations, this is a good time to tell the employer what accommodations you will need to successfully perform the job, and how you can help the employer make the necessary accommodations.
- * Discrimination is less likely when you are face-to-face with the person hiring. If the employer seems to be concentrating on your disability rather than your qualifications for the job, you do have legal recourse under the ADA.

After the interview when you are offered the job

- * If the disability information changes the employer's hiring decision and you are sure your disability would not interfere with your ability to do the job, you have very clear legal recourse.
- * YOU WOULD NEED TO BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN HOW YOU WILL PERFORM THE JOB.

After you start work

- * This timing would allow you to prove yourself to the employer prior to disclosing your disability.
- * If the employer fires you for disclosing, you may have legal recourse. However, you run the risk of being accused of falsifying your application.
- * If you are trying to get along without accommodations that you need, you may not be performing as well as you could be on the job and you could create distrust.

After a problem on the job

- * The trust issue may really come into play here with both your boss and coworkers.
- * You would again have the opportunity to prove yourself prior to disclosure but also risk not performing well if you are trying to forgo needed accommodations.

TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN DISCLOSING YOUR DISABILITY

1. Be honest, straight-forward and factual. Disclose your disability IF it affects the job; don't worry about disclosing it if it does not affect job abilities or the safety of yourself or other employees.
2. Use your best judgement in educating employers. Some employers are knowledgeable about disabilities, but many are not. Be prepared to give employers information on your disability, or let them know where they can find out more.
3. Be aware of any special accommodations you will need to do the job.
4. Be brief - don't dwell on the disability. Try not to build it into a major point of discussion.
5. Be knowledgeable about your disability. Inform employers about how you do things and how they can provide help if necessary.
6. Be enthusiastic and assertive in emphasizing your skills, abilities, ideas, assets, etc.
7. Talk with assurance.
8. Know your rights as a person with a disability.
9. Be positive, honest and specific. Don't complain or apologize about your disability.
10. Relate you disclosure comments to the job and your performance. Be realistic about how your disability might affect your work.
11. If possible, describe how your disability did not affect previous job performance, attendance, safety, etc.
12. Inform the employer if your physician has made any job restrictions or recommendations on what type of work surroundings to avoid.
13. At the end of the interview, ask if there is anything else they need to know about you.

Adapted from handout developed by: Training and Placement Service, Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota

ADAPTING THE JOB TO YOU

ADAPTING THE JOB TO YOU

A large part of reaching your goals is the identification of barriers to your success. Employers accommodate employees with functional limitations all the time. A file clerk may need a numerical filing system because they make too many mistakes when filing alphabetically, another employee may need to write everything down because they don't remember well. These are functional limitations. Individuals with disabilities may also have limitations in the performance of their chosen job.

FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS

Employers may or may not understand the limitations caused by your disability. What employers care about is your ability to do the job. It is crucial to identify the areas you will have trouble with and describe these to the employer in concrete terms along with the solutions.

TERMS TO HELP IDENTIFY YOUR FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS

attention span
balancing
bending
carrying
climbing
communication
concentration
coordination
crawling
crouching
fainting
feeling
fingering
grasping
handling
pushing
squatting
reading
seizures
sequencing
sight, partial loss
task sequencing
sitting
speech, partial loss
walking
head, moving
hearing, partial loss
hearing, total loss
interpreting data
judgment
kneeling
learning
lifting
lower extremities
memory, long-term
memory, short-term
operating, foot control
perception
planning
pulling
reaching
stair climbing
stamina
standing
stooping
sight, total loss
thinking
upper extremities
speech total loss
writing

To make an accommodation useful, it is helpful to identify the severity of the functional limitation. The accommodations required may be very different for different levels of limitation. Only functional limitations that limit your ability to do the essential duties of the job you currently hold or seek need to be discussed with the employer.

TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

In the section of this manual concerning the ADA "reasonable accommodations" is defined. Remember that what is reasonable for one employer may present undue hardship for another. If you understand your functional limitations and can talk knowledgeably with the employer about the necessary accommodations, you are much better prepared to fit in with the job and the organization.

The types of accommodations you may request include:

* making workplace facilities accessible
* modifying work schedules
* restructuring jobs
* acquiring or modifying equipment or devices
* changing interview or job locations
* retraining or reassigning employees to vacant positions
* providing qualified support services assistants

MAKING WORKPLACE FACILITIES ACCESSIBLE

One study found that 80% of accommodations in the workplace for an employee with a disability cost the employer from 0-100 dollars. Clearly many of the accommodations needed presented little or no cost to the employer. In part this is due to the low cost of the accommodations, and the cooperation of the Department of Rehabilitation Services and other agencies that serve persons with disabilities in providing funding. It is important to be flexible in talking with an employer. Offering to bring your amplified headset from your phone until an employer can purchase the equipment may make your employment feasible. Remember also that large corporations have more resources at hand and may be able to provide more costly accommodations.

In order to ascertain the accessibility of a building, there are several areas that need to be looked at starting with the entrance to the building. Ramps, electric doors and accessible parking spaces are some examples of entrance accessibility issues.

The next area to consider is the work station. Can you get there? Can you reach equipment and supplies? Can you get from your work station to other areas of the building you need access to? What modifications are essential for the performance of job duties?

Other areas of the building can present major barriers. The rest room, cafeteria, supplies area, elevator, telephones, break rooms and meeting areas are other parts of the facility to consider. Accessible signage so the rooms are clearly marked, and alarms for emergencies that all employees can perceive are critical to accessibility for people with visual or hearing impairments.

As you can see, there are many often costly improvements that employers need to consider for their facilities. The intent of the ADA is to balance building accessibility with business necessity. No one wants employers going broke trying to make old buildings perfectly accessible. However, where employers are already making changes and/or can afford the improvements, they are required to make them. You as the prospective employee need to be knowledgeable about what you need and what is the most cost-effective way to provide for those needs.

MODIFYING WORK SCHEDULES

A simple, yet often overlooked accommodation is modifying a work schedule. Once the essential features of a job are identified, the employer may see that the job could be performed with a part-time, flexible or irregular schedule.

For example, people with back injuries may be unable to sit for long periods of time. Allowing the employee to come in earlier and take longer, more frequent breaks during the day may enable that person to do the job.

Modifying work schedules may include:

* splitting the position into two part-time jobs
* adjusting the hours to lessen commuting problems or alleviate undue physical strain
* providing alternate or regular schedules to employees who require specific eating or sleeping times
* allowing time off for medical appointments or therapy
* holding a job for an employee who is hospitalized briefly

NEVER USE YOUR DISABILITY WHERE IT IS NOT THE ISSUE. ADJUSTMENTS ARE A MATTER OF FAIRNESS AND NOT INTENDED TO OFFER AN ADVANTAGE.

RESTRUCTURING JOBS

The employer's ability to restructure a job will depend in part on their awareness of the essential functions of that job. One way that employers can identify job functions is to conduct a job analysis. This is one of the services that may be offered by the local Department of Rehabilitation Services. The important thing is that the job description accurately reflects what is currently being done on that particular job. The essential functions of the job need to be detailed. Then you can identify what functions could be changed to make it possible for you to do the job.

Here are some examples of functions that may be able to be changed so that you can perform the job:

* less frequent travel
* computerize records instead of writing
* telephone work
* rescheduling of tasks
* driving
* heavy lifting
* location of office
* greeting visitors
* delivery of in-house mail
* notetaking, dictation, etc.

ACQUIRING OR MODIFYING EQUIPMENT OR DEVICES

Again the accommodations needed in this area may be much less expensive and complicated than an employer thinks. Assistive technology can be as simple as placing labels on shelves or as costly as talking computers. There are a wealth of options for all types of disabling conditions. It is thoroughly unreasonable to expect the employer to be knowledgeable about all of the possibilities.

You as the job seeker are the "expert" on this particular worker/job match. Some offices of the Department of Rehabilitation Services will have an adaptive equipment specialist who can help with the original idea and may be able to come up with some low cost alternatives for adaptive equipment. There are many companies that manufacture adaptive equipment, though purchasing a manufactured product may prove to be costly. Many people with disabilities have come up with their own low cost solutions to adaptive equipment problems.

And although it may be necessary to purchase some new items, many of the lower cost alternatives include adapting the equipment the employer already has.

Some examples of adaptive equipment solutions currently used include:

- computer operator with low vision using a voice synthesizer and software that was added to an existing computer
- an anti-glare computer screen to reduce eye glare for someone with eye fatigue
- word processing software with spell check and voice output for an engineer with a learning disability
- allowing an employment consultant to dictate notes to compensate for limited use of their upper extremities
- raising a desk for a secretary with a mobility impairment so their work station is accessible

The list of possibilities could go on nearly forever. Gather together a group of professionals when you need to come up with solutions for adapting equipment. Occupational and physical therapists, rehabilitation counselors, physicians and other professionals may help in the brainstorming process.

PROVIDING QUALIFIED SUPPORT SERVICES ASSISTANTS

Sometimes the accommodation that enables someone to work is a person - an interpreter, reader, driver or other assistant. The employer may be obligated to supply this accommodation if the person assists you in performing the job. If the assistant does the actual job, they are no longer an assistant and the employer would not be required to provide this service. The employer is also not required to provide personal care attendants. The assistant must help with the performance of the job and not be primarily present to help with personal care needs.

PAYING FOR JOB ACCOMMODATIONS

There are results from various studies on the cost of accommodations for employers. Though they don't agree exactly on the dollar amounts involved, it is clear that most accommodations for people with disabilities cost the employer less than $500. One study said 80% of accommodations are under this amount.

Still, the reality is, some accommodations do cost money. And the employer needs to make the best hiring decision they can. When the employer is faced with hiring someone who requires expensive accommodations, it would not be surprising to find them searching for reasons not to hire you. To encourage the employer to hire you, know as much as you can about how to access information about and funding for needed accommodations.

The following is a list of resources you should be aware of so that you can inform the employer of the available options.

AbleData - Contains more than 15,000 listings of adaptive devices for all disabilities. A consumer referral service that responds with printed reports to requests for information. For more information call: Adaptive Equipment Department Newington Children's Hospital, 181 E. Cedar St., Newington, CT. 06111; 1-800-344-5405.

Disabled Access Credit (Section 44 of the IRS Code): Internal Revenue Service.

IBM National Support Center for People with Disabilities: 1-800-426-2133.

Job Accommodations Network: 1-800-526-7234.

Job Training Partnership Act: Private Industry Council (State or local), Chamber of Commerce, City or State government.

Supported Employment: Local vocational rehabilitation or secondary school authorities.

Targeted Jobs Tax Credit: IRS (See Publication #908), State Employment Service, Private Industry Council, Vocational Rehabilitation (Check City or State government).

Tax Credit on Architectural and Transportation Barrier Removal (Section 190 of IRS code): Internal Revenue Service.

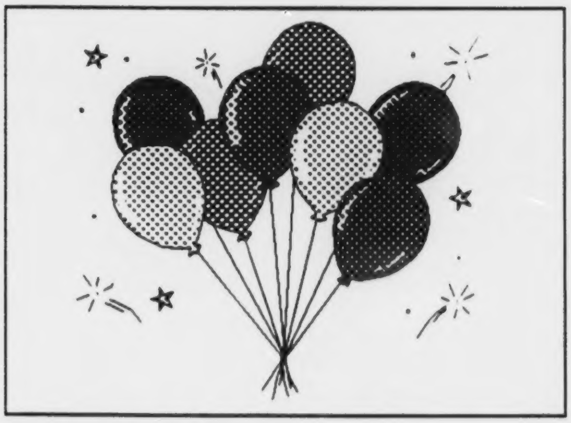
Vocational Rehabilitation On-The-Job Training Program: Local Vocational Rehabilitation Agency.

Windmills (Attitudinal Awareness Training): California Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons: 1-916-323-4545.

As you discuss reasonable accommodations with an employer, it's only fair to differentiate between accommodations that are necessities and those that are luxuries. Smart strategies to accommodations include: waiting until you are on the job to assess what are necessities (this may not be possible if the employer needs to know what you need up front). Wherever possible bring your own adaptive equipment into the workplace initially.

Adapted from: Job strategies for people with disabilities.

JOB SEARCH SKILLS



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT JOB SEEKING OR....HOW TO FIND YOUR DREAM JOB

ORGANIZING YOUR JOB SEARCH

THE FIRST THING YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT IT TAKES REAL WORK TO FIND THE "RIGHT" JOB. LOOKING FOR WORK IS A JOB IN ITSELF.

IF YOU ARE SERIOUS ABOUT YOUR JOB SEARCH:

- Spend a minimum of 25 hours per week looking for work
- Set up two interviews per week
- Practice interviewing until you are certain the employer is getting to know the best possible you
- Continue networking activities throughout your job search

It is easy to become discouraged when you are looking for work. These are some tips that will help.

- If you follow this rigorous schedule, you may be too busy to become discouraged
- Be prepared for a long search. The average college graduate spends six months looking for work
- Get together with other job seekers to share information, successes and disappointments
- Keep reminding yourself of the skills you can offer an employer

Many of the problems job seekers encounter relate to ignorance about the expectations of employers. What do employers want in an employee? How do you convince this particular employer you possess the necessary skills and abilities to do this job? The answers to these questions are really very simple.

EMPLOYERS HAVE EXPECTATIONS ABOUT YOUR *APPEARANCE*

Do you look like the right person for the job?

- Psychologists say you have 30-40 seconds to make a good impression
- Appearance consists not only of how you look, but also how you speak and act

- The paperwork used in your job hunt (application, cover letter and resume) is an important part of appearance

- Knowing how to look "professional" can aid you in overcoming employer bias

EMPLOYERS HAVE EXPECTATIONS ABOUT YOUR *DEPENDABILITY*

Do you act like the right person for the job?

- You can demonstrate reliability and punctuality during the application process

- Providing examples of your good attendance, reliability, and honesty can aid in convincing the employer of your dependability

EMPLOYERS HAVE EXPECTATIONS ABOUT YOUR *SKILLS*

Do you have the right skills for the job?

- Know how to talk about your Job Content Skills
  - these are what most people think of as job skills
  - they are specific to the occupation
  - Job Content Skills can be gained through employment, volunteer work or education
  - knowing the language of the trade can help convince the employer you know the job

- Know how to talk about your Transferable Skills
  - these are universal skills
  - Transferable Skills are any skills you can use on this job and can be gained through any of your activities
  - These skills are often the most important to the employer
  - emphasizing these skills can help you make a successful transition from school to work or during a career change

- Know how to talk about your Self-Management Skills
  - these are personality traits, they can be developed but are often just part of you
  - half of the people who are unsuccessful on the job do not fit in with the people in the organization, Self-Management Skills are very important

ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS IN DOING THE PREPARATION NEEDED TO DO WELL IN AN INTERVIEW, COMPLETING AN APPLICATION FORM OR WRITING A RESUME IS SIMPLY REMEMBERING AND DOCUMENTING WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, YOUR SKILLS AND ABILITIES, AND THEN BEING ABLE TO WRITE THEM DOWN OR TO TALK ABOUT THEM TO AN EMPLOYER.

NATIONAL FIGURES REPORT

90% of applicants can't answer problem interview questions
80% of applicants can't identify or describe their skills
40% of applicants present a poor appearance whether in person or on their applications or resumes

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS OF APPEARANCE, DEPENDABILITY AND SKILLS CAN BE MET, AT LEAST IN PART, BY HAVING COMPLETE, ACCURATE INFORMATION.

YOU NEED TO:

* understand employer expectations and have the techniques to confidently talk about the skills and abilities you have
* organize all that information you are likely to be asked during the job search process
* deal with your flaws first on paper, before they can hurt you in an interview or on your paperwork

THE ACTION BASED JOB SEARCH

There is a big difference between "getting a job" and "choosing a position" in a type of work you will enjoy and that will use your best skills.

9 out of 10 unemployed people just "get a job" because their job search is a **REACTION** to job leads they see in the newspaper, employment office, or............
This method often results in a very long job search that ends in a job the job seeker really doesn't like or plan to stay with.

The other 10% of job seekers know that an effective job search is based on a well planned, systematic set of **ACTIONS** that are directed toward the type of work they really want.

The following **ACTIONS** are based on two known facts about jobs:

#1 Only 1 out of 5 available jobs get listed with employment offices or newspapers - yet 90% of unemployed people rely on these sources for their job leads. This means few jobs and lots of competitions.

#2 The other 4 out of 5 jobs - called the "Hidden Job Market" - open and close quietly and are usually filled by the 10% of seekers who use appropriate job search methods. This means lots of jobs and little competition.

EXPLORE your work options. Realistically look at your current skills, likes, dislikes and your ability to learn new things.

CHOOSE one or two types of work you would enjoy and have at least the basic skills for. Your choices should consider your best skills and the number of potential job openings there are in the field you've chosen.

TARGET 10 to 20 employers in the area that would hire someone to do the type of work you want.

RESEARCH your target companies to learn who is the manager, how many people are employed, salaries and other information that would be helpful.

DEVELOP a list of friends and relatives who will help you find job leads, help you find out more about your target employers or who can refer you to someone else who can help.

PREPARE a sales pitch for yourself that highlights your education, experience, transferable and self-management skills.

CONTACT each employer on your target list and deliver your sales pitch. Stress your interest in the work and in the company. Also contact your friends and relatives to let them know about your skills and job goals.

FOLLOW-UP weekly, or at least twice a month. Tactfully remind each employer and friend or relative that your are still interested and available for work.

Adapted from "Job Club System: The Action-Based Job Search" by Larry Taylor.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE

IN A REPORT GENERATED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MID 1980'S, 7 BASIC AREAS OF COMPETENCE ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE WERE IDENTIFIED.

THEY ARE:

1. **Knowing how to learn.** In this age when the amount of information is doubling every 3 years, it is critical that workers know how and where to acquire the information they need. They must also know how to turn this information into skills they can use. This self guided activity forms the foundation for the other 6 areas.

2. **Reading, Writing and Computation.** It is not only necessary to have these basic skills but also important to understand their application to specific work areas.

3. **Communication: Listening and Oral Communication.** On an average workers spend 23% of their time speaking and 55% listening. Clearly these skills are critical to success on any job.

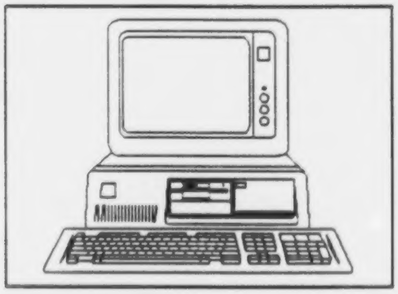
4. **Adaptability.** In this competitive world, employers are increasingly turning to new methods of streamlining and managing their companies. Problem solving and creative thinking are more and more important to all areas of the workplace.

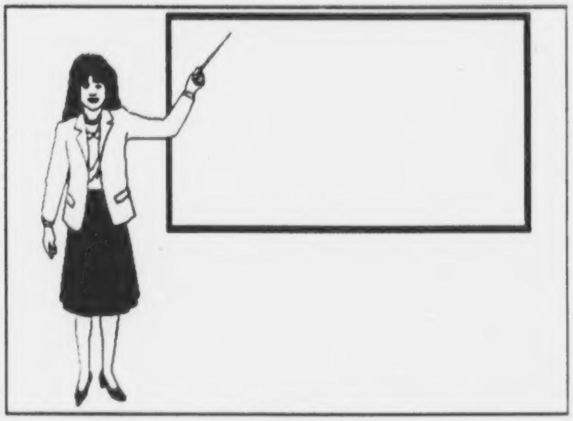
5. **Personal Management.** It is vital that an employee demonstrate motivation and an ability to develop and implement goals. This attitude of self-responsibility must be developed initially in the family and school.

6. **Group Effectiveness.** Interpersonal and negotiation skills along with teamwork are necessary to work well in the teams that are increasingly used in many business settings.

7. **Influence.** People need to understand the goals of the organization and how to motivate their fellow employees to meet these goals.

SKILL SHEETS





USE THESE SHEETS TO DETAIL YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SKILL SHEETS: YOU WILL NEED THIS INFORMATION TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION, COMPLETE A RESUME AND ANSWER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.

JOB/VOLUNTEER WORKSHEET

The first worksheet you will fill out is the Job/Volunteer Worksheet. This is the place to collect all the information you will need to convince the employer you have the necessary skills and abilities to do the job.

Be sure to include all the detail you can. The employer wants to know about your skills in working with people, data and things. Most jobs involve working with some combination of these skills.

For instance.... You worked as a waiter/waitress in a busy restaurant. Though you may think this didn't provide you with many marketable skills, in reality you developed competency in working with people, data and things. You used people skills like handling complaints and providing customer service. You used data skills in correctly entering people's orders. You used things skills when you handled kitchen equipment and serving trays.

TREAT VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES JUST LIKE PAID EMPLOYMENT. THE EMPLOYER WANTS TO KNOW THAT YOU POSSESS THE SKILLS HE/SHE NEEDS, NOT HOW MUCH YOU GOT PAID FOR DOING SO.

JOB/VOLUNTEER WORKSHEET

Name of organization:
Address:

Employed from:____________ to:___________

Job Title:
Supervisor's name:

Machinery or equipment used:

____

____

____

____

____

____

Data, information, or reports you created or used:

____

____

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____

____

People oriented duties or responsibilities to co-workers, customers, others:

____

____

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____

____

____

____

Services you provided or products you produced:

____

____

____

____

____

Reasons for promotions or salary increases or details on anything you did to help the organization:

____

____

____

____

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS WORKSHEET

After carefully analyzing what you actually did on a job, continue your job search preparation by completing the Transferable Skills Worksheet. You will find that the longer you study the tasks you described in your Job/Volunteer Worksheets, the more transferable skills you will be able to come up with. Transferable skills are particularly important if you are changing career directions, fresh out of school or you haven't held a paid position for awhile.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS CHECKLIST

Key transferable skills:

____Meeting deadlines
____Speaking in public
____Supervising others
____Accepting responsibility
____Solving problems
____Managing people
____Meeting the public
____Planning
____Controlling budgets
____Increasing sales
____Instructing others
____Managing money or time
____Meeting deadlines
____Organizing projects

DEALING WITH THINGS

____Assemble
____Build
____Construct, repair
____Drive vehicles
____Good with hands
____Make things
____Observe, inspect things
____Operate tools, machinery
____Repair things
____Use complex equipment

DEALING WITH DATA

____Analyze data, facts
____Audit records
____Budget
____Calculate, compute
____Classify data
____Compare
____Count
____Compile
____Investigate
____Keep financial records
____Locate answers
____Manage money
____Negotiate
____Inspect, record facts
____Observe
____Research

Key transferable skills:

____Detail oriented
____Evaluate
____Synthesize
____Take inventory

WORKING WITH PEOPLE

____Administer
____Care for
____Confront others
____Demonstrate
____Diplomatic
____Help others
____Insight
____Interview others
____Kind
____Listen
____Negotiate
____Outgoing
____Patient
____Persuade
____Pleasant
____Sensitive
____Sociable
____Tactful
____Teach
____Tolerant
____Tough
____Trust
____Understand

USING WORDS, IDEAS

____Articulate
____Communicate verbally
____Correspond with others
____Create new ideas
____Design
____Edit
____Ingenious
____Inventive
____Logical
____Remember information
____Research
____Speak in public
____Write clearly

LEADERSHIP

____Arrange social functions
____Competitive
____Decisive
____Delegate
____Motivate people
____Negotiate agreements
____Plan
____Run meetings

Key transferable skills:

____Direct others
____Explain things to others
____Get results
____Mediate problems
____Self-controlled
____Self-motivated
____Solve problems
____Take risks

CREATIVE, ARTISTIC SKILLS

____Artistic
____Dance
____Drawing, art
____Expressive
____Music appreciation
____Perform, act
____Play instruments
____Present artistic ideas

WRITE YOUR TOP TEN TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

____

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ADAPTIVE/SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS WORKSHEET

Adaptive/Self-Management Skills are those personality traits that you exhibit most of the time. Desirable traits, like being well-organized or very creative, are extremely attractive to an employer. Spend some time studying this list of traits. Just the fact that you have come this far in your quest for employment certainly indicates you have personality traits like perseverance and self-confidence.

ADAPTIVE/SELF MANAGEMENT SKILLS CHECKLIST

BASIC ADAPTIVE SKILLS

____Good attendance
____Arrive on time
____Meet deadlines
____Hard-working, productive
____Honesty
____Follow instructions
____Get along with peers

OTHER ADAPTIVE SKILLS

____Ambition
____Patience
____Assertiveness
____Learning quickly
____Sincerity
____Solving problems
____Friendliness
____Good sense of humor
____Physical strength
____Good sense of direction
____Self-motivation
____Result-oriented
____Pride in doing good job
____Flexibility
____Maturity
____Dependability
____High motivation
____Intelligence
____Creativity
____Leadership
____Enthusiasm
____Persistency
____Accepting responsibility
____Asking questions
____Willing to learn

YOUR TOP TEN ADAPTIVE SKILLS

____
____
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____

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL WORKSHEET

This is the place to look at all those wonderful skills you learned in college or other training you've completed. If you have little job experience or the kind of entry-level job experience students typically have, you can maximize your chances for employment by paying careful attention to this worksheet. Consider the types of classes or training that will be attractive to employers. A class in speech or interpersonal communication for instance increased your ability to work with the public and other employees. Classes in computers or typing imparted valuable work skills. Examine your past experiences to see what skills you now have that you can market to an employer.

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL WORK SHEET

Courses related to job objective:

Extracurricular activities/hobbies/leisure activities:

Accomplishments/things you did well (in or out of school)

EMPLOYER REFERENCE CHECKLIST

It is very important that you know what past employers are saying about you. Most places of business do check references. If your past employer is giving you a bad or indifferent reference, you need to find some other way of providing references. You do need references that can talk about your work skills but it does not have to be that general manager that never liked you. It could be someone else in the organization with which you worked closely. Co-workers, people to whom you provided service and other supervisors make excellent references. Call your past employers and ask them these questions. It may save you from losing a job in the future.

EMPLOYER REFERENCE CHECKLIST

Employer: ______________________________

Phone: ______________________________

Employment dates: ______________________________

Position last held: ______________________________

Salary: ______________________________

Supervisor: ______________________________

Duties/Responsibilities;

____

____

____

____

____

____

Work Quality: ______________________________

Work Quantity: ______________________________

Interpersonal skills: ______________________________

Willingness to do extra work: ______________________________

Most valuable characteristic: ______________________________

Attendance: ______________________________

Least valuable characteristic: ______________________________

Would you rehire this person? ______________________________

If no, why? ______________________________

Employer:

Phone:

Employment dates:

Position last held:

Salary:

Supervisor:

Duties/Responsibilities:

Work Quality:

Work Quantity:

Interpersonal skills:

Attendance:

Willingness to do extra work:

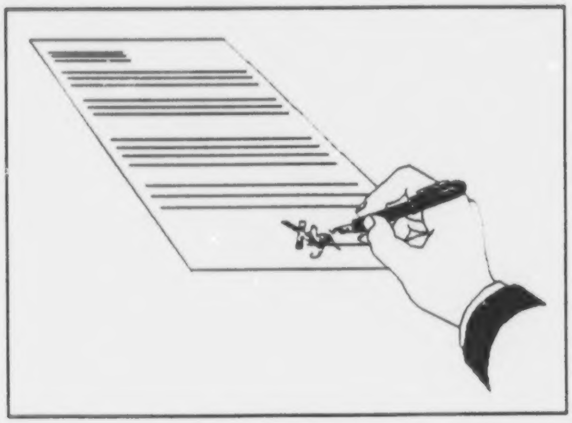
Most valuable characteristic:

Least valuable characteristic:

Would you rehire this person?

If no, why?

APPLICATIONS.........



**ARE A SCREENING TOOL,
THEY WON'T GET YOU
THE JOB, BUT THEY MAY
PREVENT YOU FROM BEING
CONSIDERED FOR THE
POSITION IF THEY ARE
NOT WELL DONE.**

APPLICATION REMINDERS

1. Be prepared!

2. Answer question as completely as possible.

3. Leave no blank spaces in question boxes. If the question doesn't apply to you, either draw a neat line through the box or print "N/A".

4. You may choose to address problem questions on the application form with the statement "May we discuss at time of interview."

5. Avoid writing "fired" on the application form, even if it applies to a given situation. Here are some acceptable responses: "seasonal employment," "to take a different position," "moved," "injury," "general lay-off," "may we discuss at time of interview," etc...

6. Each application must be:

   a. Neat
   b. Clean
   c. Complete
   d. Accurate
   e. Submitted within specified time frame

7. Always have this information available:

   a. Social Security number
   b. Driver's license
   c. Work experience (dates, company names and addresses, supervisor's name, etc).
   d. School and training experience (a number of official transcripts) records.
   e. Military record (DD Form 214)
   f. References (with referring person's permission), address and telephone number.
   g. Doctor's name, address and phone number.
   h. Emergency contact person (name, address and phone)
   i. Date of last physical exam.

8. Carry a pen and ruler.

9. Prepare a resume if you have a long and varied work history.

HOW TO HANDLE: DIFFICULT QUESTIONS ON APPLICATION FORMS

TO EXPLAIN...........

1) Gaps in employment, describe the absences using these terms:

   Returned to or began SCHOOL
   Part-time jobs
   Self employed
   Raised children
   Received career counseling/changed job goal
   Traveled
   And...Use flexible dates
      Fall 1990 - Spring 1992
      1990 - 1992

2) Job Titles: If your job title doesn't adequately describe what you did on a job, consider changing it to something more descriptive (check with former employer).

   For example: Your job title was Grocery Clerk...... A more descriptive title would be Cashier/Stock Person

3) Reasons for Leaving

   - Find out what the employer is actually saying
   - Find another reference if your boss won't be a good reference.

4) Too Little / Too Much Experience - Look carefully at volunteer, educational, hobby and other experience. Write something positive in the spaces between jobs:

   - "I worked a variety of part-time job while going to school."
   - "I am new to the job market, but I am ready to put all my energy into this career."
   - "While I do not have previous paid work experience, I have listed below some of my volunteer, sports, and other activities."

- "I have over 18 months of intensive job-related training, including hands-on experience with equipment like yours."

- My children are grown and now I'm looking for a challenging position that doesn't require relocation."

If you've had many jobs, group the older ones under a heading, such as:

- "Prior to 1972 - Held a variety of increasingly responsible jobs in sales and customer service."

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION TIPS:

- Check your appearance, even when picking up application form.
- Get several copies or make a photocopy so you have a scratch copy to do first.
- Print or type - use black ink.
- Read all questions carefully first before starting.
- Make sure all your information is complete, accurate and up-to-date.
- Check your spelling.
- Ask how long applications are kept on file.

RESUMES.....PASSPORTS TO INTERVIEWS

RESUME WRITING

The first thing you need to know about resumes is that though it is necessary that you have one, it will never get you a job. Resumes are a screening tool, similar to job applications. Yes, you do need to spend enough time to create a document that is an excellent representation of your skills and abilities. However, it isn't so important that you should agonize over some long and tedious piece of writing. Your resume should be brief and to the point and address only those things the employer wants to know.

What does the employer want to know? Well, they do not want to know what your hobbies are (unless they relate to the position you are applying for). The employer does not want to know about every job you ever held going back ten years. What the employer does want to know is that you can write concisely and appropriately and you have job and transferable skills that qualify you for the job for which you are applying.

CHOOSING A RESUME FORMAT

One of the first things you need to do in order to create a resume is to choose the format most suited to your job history. You have three basic formats to choose from, the chronological resume, the functional resume and the combination resume.

The chronological resume is a very popular resume format both for job seekers and employers. It is easy to read, and details your job history very clearly. Employers like this format because they can clearly see at a glance where the job seeker has been for the period of time covered. Nothing seems to be hidden, the dates are clearly visible and each job and/or educational experience are described clearly and concretely.

The functional resume outlines skill areas rather than presenting paragraphs on each job or educational experience. Since it is somewhat more difficult to tell at first glance what skills go with what jobs, and what exactly you were doing and when, I don't recommend this format for everyone. However, (and this is a big however) for some people this is an excellent choice of resume format. If you have very little job experience, or you have a lot of varying job experiences this may be a way to present the most important skills you want the employer to know about in an easily readable format.

A combination resume takes some characteristics from the functional and chronological resumes. The job seeker's skills are described in a separate section but each job and/or educational experience are also detailed.

HOW TO START A CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

You will need to prepare skill sheets for each job and educational experience you have had after high school. Include another sheet for other qualifications. If you haven't already, this is the time to describe in detail what you actually did on the job and/or in school.

Include a page for high school only if it was recent and you can cite some job-related classes or school activities. Include a statement about grades in high school or after high school experiences only if you have a b+ average or better.

HOW TO START A FUNCTIONAL RESUME

Identify 2, 3 or 4 major skill areas that relate to your job objective. These need to be general areas that reflect the most responsible, skilled or complex areas of the job you want.

Examples would include:
- Public relations
- Customer service
- Marketing/sales
- Office management

WRITING JOB OR SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

The next step is to write detailed descriptions of each of the job, education or skill areas you've listed.

The most effective way to start is to write short statements about your skills.
Work from the worksheets on skills, use action verbs to begin the statements. Resume language dictates that you never start with "I". You start with a verb or adjective.
For chronological resumes use each sheet for appropriate job or education.
For functional resumes use a separate sheet to list everything.
Don't try to categorize your statements now, that will come later.

ONE SKILL PER STATEMENT
CONCRETE AND SPECIFIC STATEMENTS
USE ACTION VERBS

This is a brainstorming exercise so what you want is a very long list of short statements. Try to think of everything you've done. Do not write statements like "what I was responsible for" or "duties included". Start with verbs and make action statements.

If you have a hard time getting started:

Imagine that your best friend is talking to a potential employer about you.

Think of yourself actually doing your next job and write down in short statements what you are doing, minute by minute - this also works for past jobs.

Think about what makes you stand out from someone who is average or mediocre. Emphasize the areas where you can show off your skills.

ARRANGING YOUR SKILL STATEMENTS

Chronological You will start your resume with either your most recent job or educational experience. If you have college experience that relates to your job objective, this should come first. Skill statements for each job are arranged from the most responsible/most skilled/most important down to the least. Number them 1, 2, 3, etc.

Functional Give each one of your major skill areas a letter A, B, C, etc. and then go through your list of skill statements and label each one according to the skill area it would fit under. If there is an overlap where one of your statements will fit into more than one skill area, you just have to choose the most appropriate. If you have a skill are that doesn't have many statements yet, you may want to put it there.

EDITING

Take each section - job, school, skill area:

Combine similar or related skills into longer statements.

Example Operated IBM computers.
Used word processing program.
Typed annual reports.

Becomes Operated IBM computers, used word processing program and typed annual reports.

Quantify with how much, how many or how often you performed the skill.

Example Supervised and trained a crew of 15 direct sales people.

USE SHORT PUNCHY WORDS

Example Excellent interpersonal communication skills becomes Excellent public relations skills.

IF YOU ARE USING THE CHRONOLOGICAL FORMAT YOU WILL PROBABLY WANT TO INCLUDE A SECTION ON "OTHER QUALIFICATIONS". IF YOU ARE USING A FUNCTIONAL RESUME YOU MAY WANT TO USE A SECTION CALLED "HIGHLIGHTS OR SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS".

ASSEMBLY

Now you need to assemble all the parts of your resume.

Chronological
Name
Summary of Qualifications
Education Description
Experience Descriptions
Other Qualifications
References

Functional
Name
Summary of Qualifications
Major Skill Areas
Education/Experience
References

REFERENCES

You need to assemble a separate reference sheet. Do not include your references on your resume page. If you collect three letters of reference, you don't need a reference page. These are a very good idea since many employers will ask you to submit letters of reference when you apply for a position. You can ask for a letter of reference from anyone who can talk knowledgeably about your work or education skills. This could be a former supervisor or co-worker (if you didn't have a good relationship with your former supervisor) or a teacher from your college or training experience.

FORMATTING YOUR RESUME

The best idea is to assemble your resume on a computer and save it so you can change it whenever you need to. The computer allows you to use various features to draw attention to important areas. You can use underlining, boldface, all capitals, asterisks, etc. to highlight key words, main points, skill areas, job titles, degree programs, company names or school names. However, be sparing with your highlighting or it will lose its effectiveness.

Assemble your final draft and have anyone you can ask to look at it. Put it aside and look at it again several times before you transfer it to good paper.

Your final copy should be:
- Perfect - no spelling, punctuation or grammatical mistakes.
- Typed/Word Processed - preferably word processed so you can make changes easily.
- On Good Paper - use a heavier grade of paper in white, tan, beige or other neutral color.
- With Good Print Quality - make sure your printer or typewriter has a new ribbon.

CHRONOLOGICAL FORMAT

NAME
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone

JOB OBJECTIVE (OPTIONAL)

Statement of Job Objective

WORK HISTORY

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

Most Skilled
- * Description of Job Duties/Accomplishments
- * Description of Job Duties/Accomplishments
- * Description of Job Duties/Accomplishments

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

- * Description of Job Duties/Accomplishments
- * Description of Job Duties/Accomplishments
- * Description of Job Duties/Accomplishments

EDUCATION

Date Type of Degree; SCHOOL; Address

Courses included:

Course Title/Description
Course Title/Description
Course Title/Description

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

- * Statement of Other Skills/Abilities
- * Statement of Other Skills/Abilities
- * Statement of Other Skills/Abilities

FUNCTIONAL FORMAT

NAME
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone

JOB OBJECTIVE (OPTIONAL) Statement of Job Objective

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Statement of Skill/Ability
- Statement of Skill/Ability
- Statement of Skill/Ability
- Statement of Skill/Ability
- Statement of Skill/Ability

WORK HISTORY

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

EDUCATION

Date Type of Degree; SCHOOL; Address

FUNCTIONAL FORMAT

NAME
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone

JOB OBJECTIVE (OPTIONAL) Statement of Job Objective

#1 SKILL AREA

* Statement of Skill, Ability or Achievement
* Statement of Skill, Ability or Achievement
* Statement of Skill, Ability or Achievement

#2 SKILL AREA

* Statement of Skill, Ability or Achievement
* Statement of Skill, Ability or Achievement
* Statement of Skill, Ability or Achievement

#3 SKILL AREA

* Statement of Skill, Ability or Achievement
* Statement of Skill, Ability or Achievement
* Statement of Skill, Ability or Achievement

EDUCATION

Date Type of Degree; SCHOOL; Address

WORK HISTORY

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

COMBINATION FORMAT

NAME
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone

EDUCATION

Date Type of Degree; SCHOOL; Address

WORK HISTORY

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

Statement describing job duties/ accomplishments
Statement describing job duties/ accomplishments
Statement describing job duties/ accomplishments

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

Statement describing job duties/ accomplishments
Statement describing job duties/ accomplishments
Statement describing job duties/ accomplishments

Date Job Title; COMPANY NAME; Address

Statement describing job duties/ accomplishments
Statement describing job duties/ accomplishments

SPECIAL SKILLS

NAME OF SKILL	Description of how and when you used this skill
NAME OF SKILL	Description of how and when you used this skill
NAME OF SKILL	Description of how and when you used this skill

REFERENCE SHEET

NAME
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone

REFERENCES

Name, Job Title
COMPANY NAME
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone

Name, Job Title
COMPANY NAME
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone

Name, Job Title
COMPANY NAME
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone

RESUME EVALUATION

CHARACTERISTICS

OVERALL APPEARANCE
* makes an immediate favorable impression
* is inviting and easy to read
* looks professional

CONTACT INFORMATION
* is clearly presented at the top
* includes address and telephone information

OBJECTIVE
* is stated clearly and conveys purpose
* emphasizes strongest qualifications which are likely to match the employer's needs

CONTENT
* supports and relate to objective
* stresses skills, accomplishment sand results rather than duties and responsibilities
* is free of unrelated material
* contains no negative information

LANGUAGE
* uses action verbs to begin phrases
* uses short, concise phrases instead of full sentences
* is free from grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors

LENGTH
* is brief - not more than two pages - but long enough to give a complete description of qualifications

ACTION VERBS

MANAGEMENT SKILLS

administered
analyzed
assigned
attained
chaired
contracted
consolidated
coordinated
delegated
developed
directed
evaluated
executed
improved
increased
organized
oversaw
planned
prioirized
produced
recommended
reviewed
scheduled
strengthened
supervised

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

addressed
arbitrated
arranged
authored
corresponded
developed
directed
drafted
edited
enlisted
formulated
influenced
interpreted
lectured
mediated
moderated
motivated
negpotiated
persuaded
promoted
publicized
reconciled
recruited
spoke
translated
wrote

RESEARCH SKILLS

clarified
collected
critiqued
diagnosed
evaluated
examined
extracted
identified
inspected
interpreted
interviewed
investigated
organized
reviewed
summarized
surveyed
systemized

TECHNICAL SKILLS

assembled
built
calculated
computed
designed
devised
engineered
fabricated
maintained
operated
overhauled
programmed
remodeled
repaired
solved
trained
upgraded

TEACHING SKILLS

adapted
advised
clarified
coached
communicated
coordinated
developed
enabled
encouraged
evaluated
explained
facilitated
guided
informed
initiated
instructed
persuaded
set goals
stimulated

FINANCIAL SKILLS

administered
allocated
analyzed
appraised
audited
balanced
budgeted
calculated
computed
developed
forecast
managed
marketed
planned
projected
researched

CREATIVE SKILLS

acted
conceptualized
created
designed
developed
directed
established
fashioned
founded

CREATIVE SKILLS
illustrated
instituted
integrated
introduced
invented
originated
performed
planned
revitalized
shaped

HELPING SKILLS
assessed
assisted
clarified
coached
counseled
demonstrated
diagnosed
educated
expedited
facilitated
familiarized
guided
referred
rehabilitated
represented

CLERICAL OR DETAIL SKILLS
approved
arranged
catalogued
classified
collected
compiled
dispatched
executed
generated
implemented
inspected
monitored
operated
organized
prepared
processed
purchased
recorded
retrieved
screened
specified
systematized
tabulated
validated

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter should accompany your resume. The purpose of the cover letter is to introduce your reason for submitting a resume and highlight for the employer some skills and abilities that are not covered in your resume. This is the place to tailor your application materials to the specific job for which you are applying.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Your resume highlights your skills in the area of office management. It includes details of your previous training and experience that apply to this job. In the cover letter that accompanies your resume, you can tell the employer why you want to work for this particular organization - what interests you about this place of business. You can also tell how you feel your special skills will fit in with this office environment. "I'm interested in this organization because it is a small office where I can use the variety of skills I learned in the college program I have recently completed. I enjoy working on computers as well as typing, filing and fielding questions on the telephone. I believe my ability to be flexible and versatile will allow me to be very successful in this position".

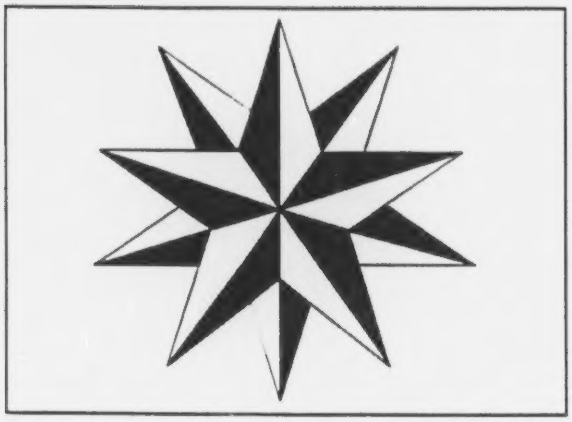
Be sure to go for the big finish. Take action to initiate another contact with the employer. "I will call next Tuesday at 11:00 to make arrangements to speak with you in person". Keep your cover letter brief. Employers do not have time to read a lengthy document and will resent being presented with one. But get to the point and make each sentence work for you.

The outline on the next page will give you a basic format to follow for a cover letter. As with any format though, be sure to vary it to fit the particular situation. When you submit a resume you may be asked to submit a particular type of cover letter. You may be asked to describe your approach to sales or teaching or any other skill area that applies to the job opening. The same rules apply as in a regular cover letter. Keep your letter brief and to the point and highlight those areas that will make you an ideal employee for that particular organization.

AN OUTLINE FOR A COVER LETTER

Applicant's Address
Applicant's Phone number (plus area code)
Date of Letter

Use complete title and address	Employer's name and Title and Address
If possible, address it to a particular person	Salutation: **Opening Paragraph(s):** State why you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying and mention how you heard of the opening or organization.
Make the addressee want to read your resume. Be personable and be enthusiastic	**Middle Paragraph(s):** Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. If you have had relevant work experience or related education, be sure to point it out.
Be brief but specific; your resume contains details.	Emphasize skills or abilities you have that relate to the job for which you are applying. Be sure to do this in a confident manner and remember that the reader will view your letter or resume application as an example of your writing skills.
Top and bottom margins should be equal. equal	**Closing Paragraph:** You may refer the reader to your enclosed resume (which gives a summary of your qualifications) or whatever media you are using to illustrate your training, interests and experience. Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for the interview by indicating the action or steps you will take to initiate an interview date.
Always sign letters and note enclosure if your resume is included.	Sincerely, Your name typed



INTERVIEWS

YOU CAN BE A STAR!

NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF JOB YOU ARE APPLYING FOR....EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR CERTAIN THINGS IN THE INTERVIEW.

INTERVIEWING

One of the most scary aspects of looking for a job is the employment interview. When you learn what to expect, and how to impress the employer, you not only feel better about the experience, you are much more likely to get the job. Knowing how to answer interview questions and follow up effectively gives you a decided advantage in the employment market.

Each player in the interview has their tasks to complete. The employer must review any information they have (resume, cover letter, application or personal knowledge). You must prepare for the interview by researching the employer, practicing answers to questions, reviewing your appearance, submitting the necessary paperwork and evaluating the personality you project.

PRECONTACT PREPARATION

The employer already knows some things about you from reading your resume and cover letter. If you were referred to the employer by someone else, they may know something about you from that source.
As a job applicant, you need to review information about the company. If it is a large organization you can do some research in the public library.

RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHING COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS:

- Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations
- Reference Book of Corporate Management
- Standard Directory of Advertisers
- Standard Industrial Classification
- International Directory of Company Histories
- Brand and Their Companies
- Moody's Industrial Manual and News Report Service
- Trinet Company Data Base
- U.S. Manufacturing Directory
- Million Dollar Directory
- Job Seekers Guide to Private and Public Companies
- Ward's Business Directory of U.S. Private and Public Companies

GOVERNMENT WORK RESOURCES:

Congressional Yellow Book
Federal Yellow Book
State Yellow Book

This is only a small sample of the resources available. Ask the librarian to guide you to organizational directories. If you are applying to a smaller company, you need to access more direct methods of gathering information. Calling the company to ask them to send you any written material on the company is one method as well as conducting informational interviews.

APPEARANCE

The simple rule of thumb for appearance at job interviews is to dress like the person who is interviewing you. People relate to people they feel comfortable with. If you are dressed like the interviewer, they are more likely to feel at ease in your presence.

The other rule of thumb related to dress is to dress one step up from what you would wear on the actual job. If this is a secretarial position and you would normally wear dress slacks and a nice shirt, wear a step up from this for the interview. If you are male, a suit or sports jacket and tie would be appropriate. If you are female, a dress or skirt with a jacket or sweater would do.

It is always worthwhile to have at least one outfit you could wear to an interview. Neutral colors are best; black, grey or navy blue. These can be enlivened with a brighter shirt or tie. There certainly are some special circumstances related to dress. If you are a woman applying for a traditionally male position requiring physically difficult or dirty work, you may not want to wear a dress. Always though, you should be clean (very, very), and well groomed. That means nylons and dress shoes with a skirt, shined shoes, hair freshly washed and neatly fixed and clean fingernails. An employer may notice very small details of your appearance so make it very nice.

One aspect of appearance that people often ignore is their body language. This conveys a direct statement about your personality. If you slouch, or don't smile, or swivel constantly in you chair, the employer will form an overall impression of you that is not positive. This is one of the reasons that practice interview sessions are invaluable. Practice with a coach or videotape yourself so you can evaluate how you are presenting yourself in the interview situation.

GREETING

It is critical that you arrive on time. If you don't, the interviewer will probably assume you are not reliable. When you enter the location, the interviewer will most likely extend their hand. After you have returned the handshake, they will make small talk to relax you and assess your social skills. All you need to do at this time is show the willingness to be sociable and friendly. Don't chatter, just follow the interviewer's lead in the conversation.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The interviewer will begin with job related questions about your skills, abilities, education, work experience, motivation and attitudes. The purpose of the questions is to assess your ability to get the job done and fit in with the organization. Hiring decisions are expensive. If the interviewer makes a bad decision it will adversely effect the finances of the company. And since more people lose their jobs because of an inability to fit into the social structure of the organization, the interviewer is anxious to assess your ability to blend with this particular work environment.

Anticipate what the employer will ask. In addition to preparing for basic questions you can assume they will ask, you must also prepare to talk about your skills that relate to this particular job. The way you answer questions may be as important as what you say. Look the interviewer in the eye and give smooth, practiced (not memorized) answers. Answers should be complete, though not overly lengthy.

Keep your answers positive. Never say negative things about your former employer. Show that you focus on solving problems and getting the job done.

PROOF BY EXAMPLE

STATEMENT:	I work very well as part of a team.
DESCRIBE THE EXAMPLE:	During college, I worked in the fast food industry. Each shift we had 8-10 people working and we often had 2-3 hour rush periods where, as a team, we served over 300 customers. Everyone had to know their job and cooperate or the whole system broke down and customers didn't get served.
WHAT WERE THE GOOD RESULTS?	We had very few mistakes or delays and the manager said we were the best team she had working.
WHY SHOULD THE EMPLOYER CARE?	If I can work in that kind of pressure situation, I know I can work with your staff and provide good service to your customers.

15 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN ANSWERING THEM:

1. Tell me about yourself. The employer wants to know about your skills and abilities and how you acquired them. The employer does not want to know personal or irrelevant information. Talk about your education and work experience.

2. What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses? Think of strong points you possess that will be useful on this job. When talking about weaknesses (yes, you do have them), talk about weaknesses that can be turned around to be positives. If you used to be less than perfectly organized, talk about the system you now use to manage your time and avoid missing appointments.

3. Why did you leave your last job? Again, this needs to be positive. If the job was boring, you might describe your search for more challenging employment. If you have added to your educational experience, you can talk about your desire for a position that uses your current talents and abilities. Never talk about leaving your job because of a conflict with your boss or co-workers. The employer can only assume this could happen again at their place of business.

4. How did you like your last job? Find some positive things to say here too. Think about aspects of the job you did like. If the job was truly unbearable and you can't think of a single nice thing to say about it, at least talk about why you are sure you will like this opening better.

5. Why do you want to work for us? This is where you can show off the research you have done on the company. Tell the interviewer how this job matches your long-range job goals. The more you know about the company, the better able you will be to answer this question.

6. What kind of salary are you looking for? This question may not be asked until you are offered the job. If it is asked during the interview, you are best to dodge the question with answers like, that would be negotiable, or I'm sure we could work that out. One concern of the employer is, can they afford you. The problem with just answering the question is you may be giving a figure that is too high or even worse, too low. If you are pushed into giving a direct answer, give a researched salary range. It is always a good idea to know the range of salaries for this job in your area.

7. What do you know about our company? Again your opportunity to show off your knowledge of the organization.

8. Why should we hire you? This question can be problematic for people who find it difficult to brag about themselves. Don't be afraid to be proud of your skills. If you are afraid to brag, there will certainly be another applicant who won't be so afraid, and they will more than likely get the job.

9. What are your long-range goals? Interviewers are impressed with applicants who know where it is they want to be in five years or ten. They are very impressed with applicants who can talk about how this job they are applying for fits in with their long range goals.

10. You seem over-qualified (or under-qualified). Explain how this job fits in with your plans. Maybe you have the education but not the work experience to move ahead in your field. Maybe you have experiences from hobbies or volunteer work that qualify you for the job.

11. What were your most rewarding experiences in school? This question can be answered in many different ways. You may be thrilled that you maintained a high GPA while working almost full-time. Or you may have been an active member of a club on campus. This is an opportunity for you to share what it is you most enjoy and give the employer an insight into your strengths.

12. Tell me about a conflict situation you have dealt with and how you resolved it. The employer wants to know if you have problem solving skills. Don't dwell on the conflict, spend time detailing your solution. Be positive about the outcome.

13. Who can we contact as references? College teachers who know you well and can talk about your work make good references. So do employees you worked closely with if you are unable to use your boss as a reference.

14. Do you prefer to work alone or in a group? The employer wants to know that you can work as part of a team. They also want to know that you can continue to work when alone. The emphasis you place will depend on your personality, but keep in mind the concerns of the interviewer.

15. What did you accomplish on your last job? Were customers pleased with the service you gave? Did you receive merit raises or promotions? Did you receive any awards or special recognition for an accomplishment? Think carefully about the positive things that happened.

YOUR QUESTIONS FOR THE EMPLOYER

After the interviewer has asked questions for you to answer, they will ask if you have any questions for them. You must have some intelligent questions. This is your chance to show the employer you are sincerely interested in the job. This is your chance to show the employer you have done your homework. Finally, this is your chance to demonstrate a willingness to adapt to this particular organization.

WINNING QUESTIONS

Good questions are related to the job for which you are applying. Ask questions about the job duties, opportunities to advance, company outlook and necessary qualities for new employees to possess.

LOSING QUESTIONS

Do not ask the employer questions that are designed to find out what the employer can do for you. Yes, you are of course interested in the salary offered. This, however, is not the time to broach salary questions. Wait until you are offered the position to start these negotiations. Do not ask about benefits, vacation or other self centered questions.

EXAMPLES OF WINNING QUESTIONS

1. What do you see as my greatest strengths and weaknesses in this position?
2. What is the most urgent or difficult part of the job?
3. What are the primary duties of this position in the first six months?
4. I know that your company _______________, I see myself fitting in this way _______________, do you agree with that?
5. When will you be making the decision to fill this position?

THE BIG FINISH

Remember the employer's last impression of you should be a strong one. Don't forget to ask for the job. In a competition between more or less equal candidates, it may be the one who asked for the job who is successful in the end. This is not being pushy. This is indicating a sincere interest to be employed by this organization.

Be sure to shake the interviewer's hand and thank them for their time. Ask when they will be making a hiring decision and if you can check back with them at a certain time. As always this should be accompanied by a friendly smile and a firm and confident hand shake.

FOLLOW-UP

The best follow up includes a written thank-you note to the interviewer. This can be as simple as a hand-written note on a thank-you card or as involved as a more formal follow-up letter. For sure you should thank the interviewer for their time, express interest in the job and remind the interviewer of your top skill. If you write a follow-up letter, take the time to explore again why you feel you are a good fit with this job and the organization.

A follow-up phone call can be arranged at the time of the interview or can be suggested in the follow-up letter. Call to express your continuing interest in the job and introduce a new point about your qualifications.

HOW TO HANDLE ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In a perfect world employers would ask only legal interview questions. They would base all of their hiring decisions on the applicant's skills and abilities. However, people being people, it is always possible you will run into an employer who allows personal bias to play a part in hiring decisions. The questions you are asked may be personal and in some cases illegal.

The purpose of existing state and federal laws is to protect the job applicant from discrimination in the hiring process. With little training you can easily recognize an illegal interview question. Much harder is the decision on how to handle the question. A question is illegal if it has no bearing on the person's ability to do the job. Therefore questions related to arrest records, place of birth, disabilities (except as they inhibit the person's ability to do the job), race, religion, marriage, children, age, etc. are by their very nature illegal.

The only exceptions to these laws are BFOQs. These are bona fide occupational qualifications. This means that the job requires certain qualifications (for instance personal appearance for a movie actor/actress) that require questions that in other settings would be considered illegal.

WHAT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN RESPONSE TO ILLEGAL QUESTIONS?

1. Simply answer the question. Many job applicants choose this answer to illegal questions. The problem with this approach is that you may be screening yourself out of a job. If the employer prefers to employ only Lutherans and you share the fact that you are Jewish, you may have lost the job. Human nature being what it is, it isn't always possible to understand the intent behind the question. You may be asked if you have a spouse and children. Maybe the interviewer is looking for people who have children because they believe this creates stability in an applicant. However, maybe they are worried about absenteeism due to child care concerns.

2. Refuse to answer the question. This is probably the worst approach. If you choose this strategy you will almost certainly end any chance of working for this organization. The job interviewer will believe that (a) you don't really want the job, (b) you are challenging his/her authority or (c) you won't fit into this organization. Certainly though if the question is inappropriate enough, you may not want to work for this company anyway.

3. Answer the concern of the question. This is the most difficult response and calls for some preparation. The advantages are the fact that you have addressed the concern of the employer without divulging inappropriate personal information. In many cases this is the best approach.

WHICH STRATEGY TO CHOOSE

This depends to a great extent on your personality and how badly you want the position. If an employer asks you very pointed, illegal and not-at-all job related questions about your disability, it may be a clue that the environment of the organization would not be positive for persons with disabilities.

The responses that employers like the best are to either answer the question directly or to answer the concern behind the question. Not surprisingly, they do not like applicant's to refuse to answer the question. While you may be giving up your legal rights by answering an illegal question, the job may be important enough to you to risk this path.

Again though, the best answer is often to answer the concern behind the question wherever possible without divulging too much personal information. This approach requires practice beforehand. You would need to think about possible illegal questions and how to respond to them prior to the interview. Most employers will be receptive to this approach.

In order to do this you would need to be familiar with illegal topic areas, practice answers to them while devoting time and attention to those questions that would particularly bother you. Having a friend perform a trial interview with you is one excellent way to practice. Renting a videocamera to tape a practice session so you can evaluate your own performance is another excellent way to practice.

EXAMPLE: Let's say you are applying for a job as an elementary education teacher. The job interviewer asks you what religion you practice. In this circumstance it may not be best to simply answer the question. What if the interviewer has a bias for a certain religion and you don't practice that religion?
You could say......"My religion is very important to me, but an even more important consideration is the religion of the children in my classroom. I wouldn't want my religion to be more important than their's."
Or you could say......."My religious beliefs are an important and very private matter. I am a very moral and honest person."

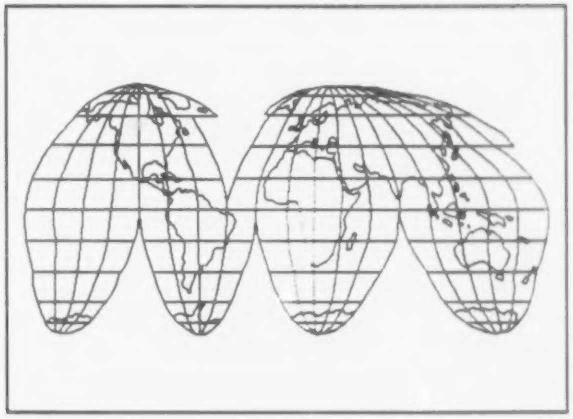
EXAMPLE: If you are asked details about your disability that are not job-related, you can use this occasion to highlight your performance without answering the question directly.
"When I was in college I was able to learn the information I needed to quickly and thoroughly. My grades were excellent."

INTERVIEW DO's AND DON'T's

Do research the company
Do prepare questions to ask
Do practice your answers
Do bring paper and pen
Do bring an extra resume
Do be on time
Do dress appropriately
Do maintain eye contact
Do wait to be seated
Do be positive
Do be honest
Do show you're a team player
Do send a follow-up letter
Do follow up by telephone
Do ask about the next step

Don't neglect appearance
Don't give limp handshakes
Don't neglect posture
Don't lack energy
Don't be rude
Don't be too familiar
Don't' give vague answers
Don't emphasize money
Don't' be indecisive
Don't be unprepared
Don't criticize anyone
Don't name drop
Don't make excuses
Don't be too aggressive
Don't talk too much

NETWORKING: ACCORDING TO LABOR MARKET STATISTICS, NETWORKING ACCOUNTS FOR 55-75% OF JOB PLACEMENTS



EMPLOYER CONTACTS/NETWORKING

FOUR STAGES OF A JOB OPENING

1. THERE IS NO JOB OPEN YET. The purpose of contacting an employer at this stage is to start to develop a relationship. If asked the employer will say they have no openings. But when the opening does arise, the employer will be much more likely to hire someone they already know.

   Example: Call the employer and say......Hi, my name is _________. I'm investigating the possibility of employment as a _____________. I have experience in (give details of your experience that relates to the job). I would like to take ten minutes of your time to explore the possibility of employment with your organization. Would next Tuesday at ten o'clock be all right with you?

2. NO FORMAL OPENING EXISTS, BUT ONE OR MORE CURRENT EMPLOYEES KNOW OF A POSSIBILITY. Again this stage offers the possibility of developing a relationship. There are many reasons someone in the organization may know of a job opening. Perhaps it is poor performance on the part of a co-worker, or expansion in some area of the business. It may not even be the boss who knows of a job opening. If the job seeker can talk with the right person however, they may gain invaluable information.

   Example: Find out from your source who would be the best person in the organization to call about this opening. Call that person and say........Hi, my name is __________. I have some special skills in the area of_____________. I'm excited about the possibility of working for your company. Could I come in next Tuesday at ten o'clock to explore these possibilities?

3. A FORMAL OPENING NOW EXISTS BUT IT HAS NOT YET BEEN ADVERTISED. If you were to ask about a job opening at this time you may still be told no. It may take weeks or months before the job is formally advertised.

Example: Find out from your source who would be the best person in the organization to talk to. Call that person and say.......Hi, my name is____________. I understand there is a possibility of an opening in the area of ___________ at your company. Because of my special skills in the area of _______ _______________, I was excited to hear this and hope I can tell you more about how well I would fit into your organization. Would ten o'clock next Tuesday work well for us to have a short conversation about the job opening?

4. THE JOB OPENING IS ADVERTISED. This is the stage at which every interested job seeker will know there is an opening and you will have to contend with **ALL** of them when you apply.

   Example: Submit your application materials in the manner specified in the job announcement. You may certainly call the contact person named in the advertisement to ask for clarification on the application materials required. You may ask how soon there will be a decision on who to interview and if they have any questions about the material you submitted. But, remember that at this point you are competing with many other job seekers who will most likely be doing the same things you are.

NETWORKING

This means the most efficient and effective way to conduct a job search must include techniques that enable you to access the first three stages of a job opening. The way that you do this is through networking. **NETWORKING** consists of those contacts with people who may help you in your job search.

LABOR MARKET STATISTICS ON JOB ACCESS

30-40%	**FRIENDS AND RELATIVES**
25-35%	**DIRECT CONTACT WITH EMPLOYERS**
10-15%	**PUBLIC AGENCY/NEWSPAPER**
3%	**SCHOOL PLACEMENT**
1%	**PRIVATE AGENCIES**

The remarkable success of networking lies in the development of relationships. Clearly, you already have a relationship with friends and relatives. The best way to take advantage of these relationships is to tell them what they can do to help you. Direct contact with employers can be accomplished with informational interviews (which we will talk about later).

85% OF JOB OPENINGS ARE NEVER LISTED IN THE NEWSPAPER OR EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

If you owned a company where would be the first place you would look for new employees?

1. Friends and relatives or people recommended by friends and relatives
2. Friends and relatives of your own good employees
3. People who have already applied directly to your company. Employers feel safer hiring someone they know or they believe they know something about.

MORE NETWORKING

Networking provides a way to access the hidden job market. There are insiders who know where the jobs are for your field.

The only way to break into this system is through networking, creating that relationship with the employer.

WARM CONTACTS (PEOPLE YOU KNOW)
relatives
friends
other students
professors
neighbors
church members
community associations
dentist/doctor/lawyer
people who share your hobby
former employers
former co-workers
parent's friends

COLD CONTACTS (MORE TRADITIONAL SOURCES)
newspaper
employment service
yellow pages
public library -directories
chamber of commerce
professional associations
bulletin boards

WHEN NETWORKING YOU WANT TO FIND:

1) People who are easy to approach and talk to.
2) People who are knowledgeable and successful in the field.
3) People with lots of connections.
4) Other job seekers.

* Make your first contacts with people you know well and who will respond positively to your request for information and help.

AND

* Build on these first contacts to gradually widen your circle of people who can help you find employment.

Networking is more work, but it has some definite **ADVANTAGES:**

1) You are no longer a stranger - you either know the person or someone has referred you.
2) You can plot your own course of action - you are not dependent on what show up in the newspaper or employment office.
3) You can be original and flexible:
    * Your not competing for an open, advertised position - you may be the only one interviewed.
    * You can focus on your own skills and accomplishments - without being limited by the qualifications listed in an ad.
    * You may even be able to "create" your own position by identifying (and then filling) a need for an employer.

* If you do this properly, within the first 25-30 contacts you will have a job offer - this may/may not be the right one for you.

* **Always** follow-up with a thank you note.

* Use the telephone to get informational interviews.

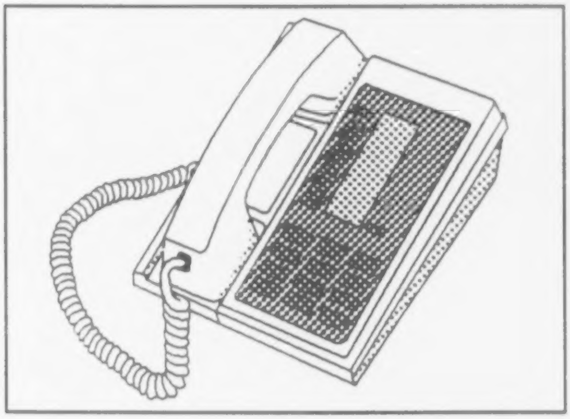
* Telephone contacts - propose to meet face to face or glean information.

* Use marketing techniques - selling yourself.

* Get referrals to other employers.

TELEPHONE CONTACTS.....

THE TELEPHONE IS YOUR KEY TO MEETING EMPLOYERS. USE THE PHONE TO SET UP INFORMATIONAL AND JOB INTERVIEWS.



WHEN YOU LEARN THE RIGHT TECHNIQUES, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO LEARN SOMETHING VALUABLE EACH TIME YOU CALL AN EMPLOYER. USE THE FORMAT ON THE NEXT PAGE TO CONTACT EMPLOYERS. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY AND PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.

TELEPHONE CONTACTS THAT WORK

* INTRODUCE YOURSELF

* ASK TO SPEAK TO THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF HIRING - GET THAT PERSON'S NAME
  - not personnel department - they only screen applicants, they don't hire.
  - ask for the owner / manager / head of department

* INTRODUCE YOURSELF AGAIN AND USE THE EMPLOYER'S NAME

* GIVE A BRIEF STATEMENT OF YOUR SKILLS

* ASK FOR AN INTERVIEW - 3 TIMES

  - ask to talk to the employer about any present openings - if the employer says no then.......
  - ask the employer to talk about any future openings - if the employer says no then........
  - ask the employer for an interview to get information

USE FORCED CHOICE TECHNIQUE........
Would next Tuesday or Wednesday at ten o'clock be better for you?

* ASK FOR A REFERRAL
  - to other organizations that just might be hiring

* ASK TO CALL BACK
  - try to establish a timetable within which to call again

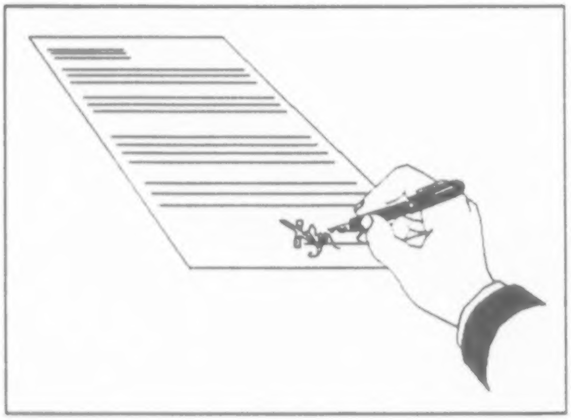
* THANK THE EMPLOYER

WHAT POTENTIAL DO TELEPHONE CONTACTS LIKE THIS HAVE???
THEY CAN GET YOU.........
- an interview - referral to another company
- more information about the business and how they hire people
- future job possibility

MARKETING

OFFERING THE VALUE OF YOUR SKILLS AND ABILITIES TO THE EMPLOYER IN EXCHANGE FOR THE JOB YOU WANT.

CAREFULLY TAILORING YOUR APPROACH TO IDENTIFY AND FULLFILL EMPLOYER'S EXPECTATIONS.



MARKETING

The next few pages in your handbook deal with the concept of "marketing". Perhaps you're wondering why there would be information on marketing in a job seeking skills manual. Very simple. When it comes to finding your ideal position, one must do a masterful job of marketing themselves. Would you buy a new product if it was presented to you in a haphazard or sloppy manner? Would you shop at a store that was run down, poorly staffed, and frequently out of merchandise? Of course not! And just like you, employers are consumers (of applicants) when they are seeking employees. They will almost always "buy" (hire) the person who markets themselves most successfully.

The definitions that follow are very straight forward and really require no further elaboration. Read them carefully and allow yourself to absorb the information so that your behavior in the job seeking market flows from these principles.

DEFINITIONS

MARKETING: THE DISCIPLINED TASK OF CREATING AND OFFERING VALUES TO OTHERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACHIEVING A DESIRED RESPONSE.

MARKETING: THE ANALYSIS, IMPLEMENTATION, AND CONTROL OF CAREFULLY FORMULATED PROGRAMS. MARKETING IS DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT VOLUNTARY EXCHANGES OF VALUES WITH TARGET MARKETS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACHIEVING ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES. MARKETING DEPENDS HEAVILY ON DESIGNING THE ORGANIZATION'S (YOUR) OFFERINGS IN TERMS OF THE MARKET'S (EMPLOYERS') NEEDS AND DESIRES. MARKETING USES EFFECTIVE PRICING, COMMUNICATION, AND DISTRIBUTION TO INFORM, MOTIVATE, AND SERVICE THE MARKET.

MARKETING VS. SALES

SALES: FOCUSES ON THE NEEDS OF THE SELLER

MARKETING: FOCUSES ON THE NEEDS OF THE BUYER; I.E., EMPLOYER NEEDS AND NEEDS OF THE JOB.

MARKETING ASSUMPTIONS

EACH PARTY:

- HAS SOMETHING OF VALUE FOR THE OTHER
- IS CAPABLE OF COMMUNICATION AND DELIVERY OF WHAT MEETS THE NEEDS AND WANTS
- IS FREE TO ACCEPT OR REJECT THE OFFER

CONCEPTUALIZING MARKETING

-1- MARKETING MANIFESTS ITSELF IN CAREFULLY FORMULATED PROGRAMS - NOT - JUST RANDOM ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE DESIRED RESPONSES.

-2- MARKETING SEEKS TO BRING ABOUT VOLUNTARY EXCHANGES OF VALUE

- MARKETERS SEEK A RESPONSE FROM ANOTHER PARTY, BUT IT IS NOT A RESPONSE TO BE OBTAINED BY ANY MEANS OR AT ANY PRICE.
- THE MARKETER SEEKS TO OFFER **BENEFITS** TO THE TARGET MARKET OF SUFFICIENT ATTRACTIVENESS TO PRODUCE A VOLUNTARY EXCHANGE.

-3- MARKETING MEANS THE SELECTION OF TARGET MARKETS RATHER THAN AN ATTEMPT TO WIN EVERY MARKET AND BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PERSONS.

-4- THE PURPOSE OF MARKETING IS TO ACHIEVE ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- EFFECTIVE MARKETING PLANNING REQUIRES BEING VERY SPECIFIC ABOUT TARGET OBJECTIVES.

-5- MARKETING RELIES ON DESIGNING THE ORGANIZATION'S OFFERINGS IN TERMS OF THE TARGET'S NEEDS AND DESIRES RATHER THAN IN TERMS OF THE SELLER'S PERSONAL TASTES.

-6- MARKETING UTILIZES AND BLENDS A SET OF TOOLS CALLED THE MARKETING MIX.

  - THIS REQUIRES A BROAD CONCEPTION OF ALL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE BUYING BEHAVIOR (PRODUCT & SERVICES).

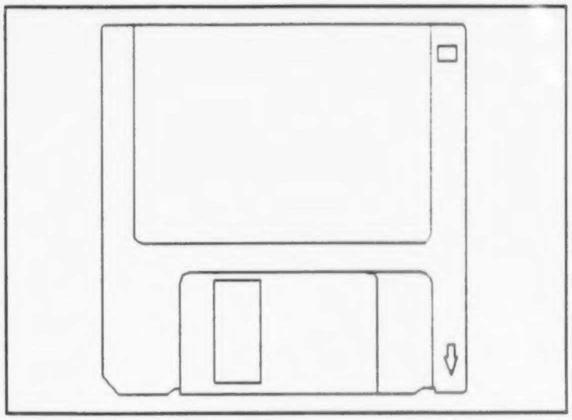
THERE ARE DIFFERENT STYLES OF MARKETING

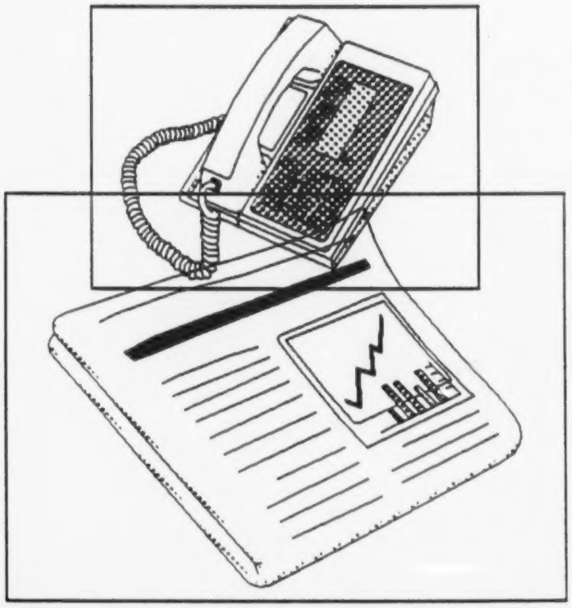
- AGGRESSIVE MARKETING -
  - HARD SELL - I.E., AUTOMOBILES, ENCYCLOPEDIAS (DOOR-TO-DOOR), LAND DEVELOPERS, VARIETY OF PROMOTIONS

- MINIMAL MARKETING -
  - NO SELL - I.E., HOSPITAL WITH CAPACITY FILLED, "DEMAND FOR PRODUCT SO GREAT, DO NOT NEED TO MARKET"

- BALANCED MARKETING -
  - AGGRESSIVE MARKETING - RELIES ON PROMOTION
  - MINIMAL MARKETING - RELIES ON PRODUCT
  - BALANCED MARKETING - RELIES ON A MIX OF QUALITY PRODUCT WITH APPROPRIATE PRE-PLANNED PROMOTION OF THE PRODUCT/ SERVICE.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR SEEKING A JOB





SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR SEEKING A JOB

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

This method of job seeking is at the heart a less traditional method of looking for a job. The first way to decide where to conduct an informational interview is to evaluate your own vocational interests and curiosities. This is the time to reflect back to even those childhood fantasies such as, "When I grow up, I'm gonna be...." Evaluate (again vocationally) the panorama of people in the world. Who are your heroines and heros? Who do look up to and admire the most? What kind of job do they have? Could you or would you like to do that? You get the idea! Run with this process and be as creative as you possibly can. Begin to develop a list of occupational fields you feel you would like to explore. Other sources of information for informational interviews might include:

- Network of contacts
- Yellow pages
- Directories
- Friends
- Co-workers
- Relatives

The actual mechanics of conducting an informational interview are simple. Once you've developed a respectable list of interest areas, the next step is to identify real business establishments that exist in your community. The purpose of the informational interview is gather information. Think of yourself as a researcher. A researcher wanting to know about many aspects of the selected company. For instance, you could explore these topics with the person you meet:

- General information about the company or business?
- How did the person you're interviewing get into this line of work?

- Ask for a description of the "ideal applicant" from the employer's perspective?
- Inquire about levels of employment--that will provide information about potential promotional opportunities within the work environment?
- Ask about the short and long-range goals for the business?
- Information about the physical layout of the facility as well as the physical layout of typical workstations?
- Information about the physical demands/requirements of various positions?
- Ask what the employer prefers in the applicant's education.

As with any job search method, informational interviewing has certain advantages and disadvantages. As this is one of my personal favorites when discussing job search strategies, let's first discuss advantages:

ADVANTAGES:

1) Has proven to be a more effective method of job search for countless people.
2) Much more often, this method produces a job in which you have an authentic interest.
3) Dramatically reduces the pressure on you!! Informational interviewing puts YOU in the drivers seat. The reason? Instead of you being the interviewee, you are the interviewer!! Consequently, you're apt to be less nervous and therefore more likely able to make that all-important good impression (critical if you should decide to follow-up with this same person in the future as a authentic job applicant).
4) Affords you a unique perspective with the company--an inside view, if you will. Rest assured that most of your competition in the future will not have conducted this kind of research! The inside information can make the critical difference between a job applicant coming into a job interview knowledgeable vs. blind. Who would you hire?!
5) Establishes you as a KNOWN quantity to the employer. The importance of this fact should never be overlooked because research demonstrates that employers will hire those they know before hiring those they don't know.
6) Provides a starting point in the relationship with that employer and a reference upon which to base subsequent, follow-up contacts.

DISADVANTAGES:

1) Takes time and effort to research the companies you would like to contact.
2) Involves some risk of being turned down, so requires a degree of assertiveness on your part.
3) Because this may well represent a new behavior on your part it will initially feel uncomfortable, and may seem difficult (practice and patience make for smoothness).

WORD OF MOUTH

The method of seeking job information through "word of mouth" or the "grapevine" is probably my #2 overall choice. Generally speaking, people will help those they know. Think about it now. If you had a friend in need, and you knew exactly what it was he or she needed, and it was within your power to deliver, would you? Of course!! Using this less formal "networking" method of job seeking can be fun. In addition, this practice increases your power as a job seeker. Can you picture all those additional eyes and ears (this is, of course, assuming you have friends, neighbors that like you, and relatives who care) listening out for potential leads! You can imagine that between the leads you would be turning up yourself, plus those others from your "grapevine"turn up, you could be one busy person as you respond to the job leads.

Who are the people that would make up this "grapevine" or "word-of-mouth" network? They could include friends, neighbors, relatives, co-workers, or potential employers. The reason for using potential employers is so that when an opening in their firm develops, you'll come to mind. The network might also include former employers who recognized you as a valuable employee. They just might want to lend you a helping hand now if you let them know you're on the hunt for a new position. You probably can't have too many people helping you at a time like this. The morale of this story is: Don't be shy!

As with any job-information seeking method, there are advantages and disadvantages. On the advantage side, you need to remember that 80% of jobs in the U.S. are filled through a "word-of-mouth" grapevine. A possible disadvantage could be that if you're currently employed, you may not want to tip off your co-workers or present boss that you're looking for work elsewhere.

UNIONS

Unions are a potentially wealthy source of information about the employment market. If there is one single feature that characterizes the image of unions it is cohesiveness. That translates into a large, usually well organized network. The nature of the union is people helping people. So the task for the job hunter is to become very well acquainted with, or connected to an appropriate, local union.

Locating the unions in your city shouldn't be too much of a problem. The Yellow pages in the back of your telephone book ought to list the major union organizations (addresses and telephone numbers). In the event that you live in a large, metropolitan area, the city library would house that information too.

There are a few choices when it comes to initially contacting a union. Writing, stopping by, or calling on the telephone. Your initial contact should be to inquire about the kind of services they offer. Many, if not most unions, have abundant printed materials available at no cost. As you consider the manner by which you make your first contact with a particular union group, remember this basic information. You are most effective if you contact people **face-to-face**. A piece of paper (like a resume) can quickly be disposed of or set aside. A real, live body though, requires a human response. Think of it as an opportunity to become a known quantity, and an opportunity to make a strong, positive impression. While the office you visit may or may not offer specific job placement services, you may happen upon a union officer willing to offer you an inside tip. If nothing else, you can ask for the names of other people who could assist you further. It would be appropriate to send helpful persons you may have contacted a thank-you note. The note should be postmarked not more than 24 hours after your contact. That way, the recipient will probably still remember you when he or she opens the note (yet another **positive** point of contact)!!

As with other sources of job-seeking information, this source has its' advantages and disadvantages. First of all let's look at advantages. When contacting union personnel you are obtaining employment information from those who are in contact with numerous potential employers on a regular basis. The other advantage is that you're likely to pay no fee. Two disadvantages are that this method requires time and effort and requires some courage to call people you don't know. But as the saying goes: No risk, no gain!

YELLOW PAGES

First of all, and needless to say, one can locate the yellow pages in your local telephone directory. The yellow pages can serve as an excellent source of business (and therefore employment) listings. Each listing represents a potential source for an informational interview. More realistically, the listings that correspond to your specific area of interest, can serve as possibilities for contact.

You might wonder specifically how to go about making your "fingers do the walking for you" through this section of the phone book. Well, to begin with, just read through the index in the back of the Yellow Pages to identify the various categories. The category entitled "Associations" is an especially rich source of information. From what you find there develop a list of categories of **positions** and **types of places** in which you have an interest. Here are a couple of ways to proceed:

1. Start calling each listing to inquire about the possibility of employment.
2. Select a few places and check them out--visit the business and inquire about possible employment (you could set up an informational interview and check them out that way as well).

Even if there aren't any current positions available, you could inform them that you're interested in their company and any positions that might develop in the future. Be sure you get the name of a contact person within the company for future reference.

Here are the advantages and disadvantages of this method. Advantages include the fact that it is free and easily available. The Yellow Pages have proven to be an effective method of identifying potential employers. From the employer's perspective, your use of this method will demonstrate that you have real initiative. The possible disadvantages are that looking up the information, listing it out and making the contact, takes time. In addition to that, the cold contact will require some courage.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Special Interest Groups can be invaluable as a source of information during your job hunt process. Some examples of such groups include:

- Veterans Administration and organizations
- Women's organizations (NOW, WOW, etc.)
- Women's Centers
- Chamber of Commerce
- Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis
- Community Centers
- Forty Plus Club
- Parents Without Partners
- American Association of Retired Persons

As above, you will probably locate these organizations through the Yellow Pages or at your public library. Actually, telephoning your librarian might help. Once he or she becomes familiar with what you're needing, you could use that person for an information source on a regular basis.

Once you have the name of the groups that interest you, give them a call to see if they would actually be able to help you. Inquire as to the kind of services they offer. Let them know what you're looking for in the way of employment opportunities. Ask for suggestions of where you might be able to find additional help. Who knows?? They might even have a job opening in their agency.

Remember why these groups exist. Often they were formed because many of the original members had experienced personal/professional problems that were solved when approached collectively. It is to your advantage to find **groups** that have problems, concerns and goals that are similar to yours. Therein lies understanding, and most often no fee. As above, the disadvantage is the time factor and the cold contact with persons you didn't previously know.

PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS, NEWSLETTERS AND TRADE MAGAZINES

These publications are very good sources of employer information as well as sources for informational interviews. You could find copies of these materials in your local library. In addition, persons currently employed in a particular field may be subscribing to relevant publications. Perhaps they would be willing to lend you their copy. Should you become aware of a publication that is right up your alley, there is nothing preventing you from subscribing yourself. You can do that whether you're a member or not.

Professional journals, newsletters and trade magazines provide a host of field related articles and they have a very practical application too. Most have regular sections of want ads. A job seeker could scan the articles for openings of new businesses, announcements of government grant awards, or new products. Those pieces of information translate (=) **NEW JOBS**. Browsing through this kind of professional literature will leave you informed about the most recent jargon in the fields that interest you.

Here are some examples of professional journals, etc...:

- *E.A.P. Digest*
- *Publishers Weekly*
- *Chronicle for Higher Education*
- *American Journal of Public Health*

Advantages and disadvantages of this method? As far as advantages, these publications represent information from a direct source. Know that most of the jobs that you'll see in these journals never get published in newspapers or registered with employment agencies. Also, for just the price of the magazine you receive a monthly, biweekly, or weekly source of job listings in the specific field of your interest. A disadvantage with this method is that if you're relatively unskilled, many of the positions listed in the journals are for highly trained, educated or experienced personnel. Occasionally, though you are apt to spot positions that require less formal training in the field.

PLACEMENT OFFICES

As you're making the rounds as a job seeker, gathering information, it's not a bad idea to check with placement offices. These offices are found at colleges, universities, community colleges, technical schools, proprietary schools and are there primarily to provide placement services to their students. On campus, they can be located by checking in a student handbook or school telephone directory. Otherwise, check with your advisor, counselor, teacher, or other students who might have utilized the service.

These offices provide a myriad of services for students. You may want to begin your relationship with office personnel with a phone call regarding procedures. Another option would be to stop by and request an explanation of the services available. Pick up a office brochure if one is available. At any rate here are some of the services typically offered:

- Maintaining a file of your transcript, records, letters of commendation and other pertinent job-seeking information.
- When you are applying for a job, you can provide the the placement office with the name and address and they'll send your file to the perspective employer.
- Keep and post a listing of companies and institutions periodically visiting the college to interview students.
- Set up interviews with prospective employers who come to the school.

A clear advantage of using the placement office's services is that will mail your letters, records, transcripts for you. Clearly, that saves you time and effort. A second advantage is that even after you leave the educational institution, a file is maintained and available for you. The file is one that you can add to and update. Finally, these offices usually charge no fee at all or a very small fee. Disadvantages here are few. One to consider though is that any letters of recommendation and records must be general in nature. A second disadvantage is these services are sometimes only available to graduates.

PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

This section of your manual would be remiss if there was no mention of private employment agencies. As a job seeker these agencies should be nearly dead last on your list of helpful options. Given that their main goal is to make money, the personnel working such agencies are not so concerned with a "good job" for you but rather just "any job." Consequently, many of the people they "place" only remain on the job for a short period of time (placing the worker right back into job search mode with all the accompanying emotions in tow). User beware!! Attend closely to the fine print regarding fees. It could be employer paid or employee paid. The fee may represent a large percentage of your salary if you're not very careful.

OTHER POSSIBLE INFORMATION SOURCES

- County and City Personnel offices
- Civil Service Commission
- State Employment Agencies
- Shotgun letters and resumes to perspective employers

WHAT TO DO IF YOU CAN'T GET A JOB

In many fields and in some parts of the country, employment is harder to procure than it was just a few years ago. This fact adds yet another dimension to the already difficult process of securing that first important job. Listed below are some options that just might increase your long-term career prospects.

> Increasing numbers of employers are looking to temporary employees to recruit staff for peak periods or to avoid the commitment that goes along with permanent staff (i.e., benefit packages, etc...). You still receive a pay check while learning more about the world of work. In fact, temporary positions often lead to a meeting with a permanent employer and steady work.

> Evaluate you situation from time to time with career counselors, including some personnel you may not have previously utilized. Any time you are in career counselor offices, check out their bulletin boards and other publications for new job leads.

> Give thought to accepting any position that presents itself within the career field that interests you. While it may not be at the particular level you desire, once you are inside the organization, you will have the opportunity to investigate other positions and hopefully move up.

> Economic conditions vary from region to region in the U.S. economy. Periodically review financial and other publications to help spot cities and states where positions in your field are more abundant. You just may learn a lot by simply subscribing to one or two out-of-state newspapers and checking the classified ads.

> Seek work, even without pay, particularly if you fancy a specific organization or field. Valued volunteers may receive consideration when hiring does occur or you may make yourself vital by the level of your work. Hint: if you decide to volunteer, you should endeavor to get placed at a job which provides the kind of experience you know will serve your occupational needs.

> Schedule appointments with employers and others in fields which interest you. Inquire about state of the of the occupation, employment trends, and suggestions for further contacts. This process will make you a better informed candidate and you will probably come across some potential employers as you work the occupational turf. Informational Interviews like this will serve you well later.

> In the event that positions within you field are very scarce, do career counselors recommend additional training or an advanced degree to bolster your qualifications?

> Because there is often a crush of applicants for a single position, make **certain** that your letters and resumes are as strong and flawless as possible. Seek out experts to evaluate your paperwork. Seek out and attend workshop or classes on job seeking skills. Practice your interviewing techniques and strengthen those skills.

> Research! Research! Research! You really can't know too much about potential employers. Assume that your competitors have done their research. Make certain that your knowledge about potential employers is clearly reflected in applications submitted and other paperwork heading for the employer's desk.

SELF-ADVOCACY

LEARNING TO IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS
ASKING FOR WHAT YOU NEED
BEING MORE INDEPENDENT
TAKING RISKS
TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

SELF-ADVOCACY

Self-advocacy for a job seeker with a disability involves having the knowledge and skills to get the job he/she wants. Certainly this will entail reading and completing the exercises in this manual. If you want a job, you need to be ready to compete with other job applicants. This entails being ready to discuss your skills and abilities and how they qualify you for the position. This also depends on you doing your homework - having a professional quality resume, cover letter and application - knowing what the employer needs and how to answer those needs.

Since the focus of the rest of this manual has been on supplying you with the knowledge to conduct a job search, this section will focus on how to apply that knowledge. How do you speak up for your rights? How do you assert yourself without losing your opportunities? How do you advocate for your rights as a person with a disability?

The key to self advocacy is to have the information you need and then to apply that information appropriately. You must understand your strengths and weaknesses and be ready to explain how you will fit into this organization. You need to be the expert on the accommodations you will need. If you can't answer questions about how your disability will impact employment, how can the employer? You have spent some time exploring your skills, the laws that apply to you and how to "sell yourself" to the employer. These are vitally important knowledge areas for conducting a job search. Now we will look at the skills necessary to apply that knowledge and become your own "self-advocate".

Some of the skills you need we have already discussed in other chapters: knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses and how to convey that to an employer, knowledge of your disability and what accommodations you need to be successful on the job, knowledge of your rights under the ADA, and goal setting.

SOME OF THE SKILLS YOU NEED TO BE YOUR OWN SELF-ADVOCATE WE HAVEN'T YET DISCUSSED. THESE ARE........

PROBLEM SOLVING
COMMUNICATION SKILLS
ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING
LOCATING COMMUNITY RESOURCES
MANAGING TIME
IMPROVING SELF CONCEPT
ANGER MANAGEMENT

PROBLEM SOLVING

The problem solving approach has numerous applications in daily living as well as on-the-job. Employers are very impressed with applicants who can demonstrate their ability to problem solve. Not every situation is amenable to problem solving, but when you learn to look at situations as opportunities to enhance these skills, there are many more opportunities than you would think. The particular technique outlined below has been used with married couples, between friends, in the workplace and to mediate between rival gangs.

The idea isn't so much to learn one problem solving technique and only use it occasionally when it fits the situation perfectly. The idea is to learn what problem solving is, and then to look for ways to apply those principles to various situations. Problem solving is an approach to conflict that allows that conflict to be resolved. This is a critical skill. Conflict will always exist on-the-job as well as in personal relationships. Knowing how to deal with it is an important skill.

Problem solving is a structured interaction intended to solve a conflict. In this example, the agenda is planned in advance to deal with one problem. The purpose of problem solving in this instance is to improve relationships and resolve a mutual problem.

Problem solving begins with a definition of the problem. The definition should begin with a positive statement. This sets the tone for the discussion and allows you to begin on a positive note. You then move on to describe the problem including your part in it. The idea is to define the mutual problem as quickly as possible so you can move on to solving it. The definition needs to be as concrete as possible.

Then you brainstorm solutions to the problem. At this point, you don't censor any of the solutions. Write them all down, no matter how ridiculous they seem. Once you have a complete list of possible solutions (at least 20), you narrow down the list. First you delete the obviously silly solutions. Then you discuss the rest until you both arrive at the best answer to your mutual problem.

The solution to the problem must contain observable behaviors. It must be written down so there will be no mistake about what was agreed upon. It must be a negotiated solution and involve compromise on the part of both parties. This is a quick explanation because the only way to learn problem solving is to try it yourself.

FOR EXAMPLE: Beth has been working for the fire department in a small town for six months. She is the first woman fire fighter this department has ever hired. The men in the department are not used to working so closely with a woman. They often tell crude jokes and make remarks that Beth finds offensive. She has no idea how to approach the problem without alienating her co-workers. Beth withdraws from the other fire fighters and feels resentful. The men don't understand her withdrawal and feel uncomfortable around her. No one wants to work with her and the morale of the department is not good.

DEFINE THE PROBLEM: This is a mutual problem. Beth has a problem but so does the department since it is critical that they all work well together as a team. The problem is two-fold. Beth is uncomfortable with some of the jokes and remarks the men tell. She has withdrawn from the other firefighters. The other part of the problem concerns the men in the department. They don't like working with Beth and feel uncomfortable around her. The morale of the department is adversely affected.

BRAINSTORM: Beth could charge the men with sexual harassment.
Beth could quit her job.
The fire chief could call a meeting and tell the men to knock it off.
Beth could forget it and just learn to live with the discomfort.
The men could tell her to lighten up.
The fire chief could require the men to attend sexual harassment training.
The men could quit.
The whole department could get together to talk at some neutral location.
The fire chief could call in a facilitator familiar with these kinds of situations to help with a meeting.
Beth could yell at the men whenever they tell jokes she doesn't like.
Beth should get counseling.
etc. etc. etc.

FIND A SOLUTION: The solution can be a combination of the best ideas. Maybe attending sexual harassment training, having a meeting at a neutral location so they could talk about what has been happening and Beth going to counseling would be a good combination. When you write out the agreed upon solution it needs to be specific and measurable.

The fire chief will call a meeting to explain the problem and the steps that will be taken to solve it on Monday, June 4th. The men will attend sexual harassment training the following Monday. The whole department will then meet for dinner at __________ on Friday to discuss what they have learned. Beth will be encouraged to talk with a counselor to work out her feelings and learn how to relate more positively with the men.

IF YOU ARE HAVING A RELATIONSHIP PROBLEM AT WORK, OR IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE, IT IS FAR BETTER TO WORK TOGETHER FOR A SOLUTION THAN TO ESCALATE THE PROBLEM. THE PROBLEM WILL NOT GO AWAY AS LONG AS YOU ARE VIEWING IT AS ONLY SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Good communication skills are vital to many activities; looking for work, maintaining employment and forming personal relationships. We all communicate constantly, it's impossible not to communicate. Not talking does not stop communication. The fact that you are silent is saying something in and of itself.

We all learn to communicate while we are growing up. We learn what we observe in others. If the people we are surrounded with when we are children (parents, peers, teachers, etc.) communicate clearly and assertively, we may learn to deal with others that way too. If, as is true of most people however, the people we learn from have less than clear or assertive communication styles, we will learn to communicate in ways that are less than ideal.

Communication can be intentional or unintentional. All you have to do to illustrate this point is to think about the array of facial expressions you have seen on people and how clearly their feelings are conveyed without words.

Communication is irreversible and unrepeatable. You can wish you could take back some words, but the reality is you can't. Communication is unrepeatable because you can never copy the words, tone or intent accurately later.

Effective communication requires self-monitoring. You need to notice how and what you are communicating in order to be effective. Non-verbal communication needs to agree with what you are saying and your message must be clear. When communicating with others it is frequently a good idea to check what you heard.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

More communication is always better. Actually, in most circumstances, less communication is better. People do not understand a large percent of what they hear. Often people are too busy reading non-verbal messages or reacting to their own estimate of what others are saying. The best message is simple and succinct.

Communication will solve all problems. It helps certainly, but nothing is a cure-all for every situation.

Communication is a natural ability. Communication is a learned skill, not something you are born with.

COMMON DISTORTIONS IN PERCEPTION

We are influenced by the obvious. People notice the most obvious parts of the message and often miss more subtle cues.

We cling to first impressions. If you look dirty and unkempt when you first meet someone, they will have a hard time overcoming that initial impression even if they later find out you are a brain surgeon and a pillar of your community.

We assume others are like us. It is very easy to fall into the trap of assuming that other people mean the same thing you would if you made that statement. People come from all different backgrounds and to assume you know what they mean is to risk making a large mistake.

We favor negative impressions. People remember negative things much more readily than they remember positive or neutral impressions.

COMMUNICATION/MEN AND WOMEN

One of the traps it is easy to fall into with communication is to assume that the opposite sex thinks the same way you do. Men and women are raised with different attitudes, styles and expectations and it is important to be aware of these differences.

Though there are exceptions to the rule, men who communicate more like women traditionally do and vice versa, generally speaking these norms hold true. Boys are raised differently than girls. The styles and expectations we all have were learned in early childhood. The difficult part is that communication seems so natural, we assume our way is just the right way. Often it never even occurs to us there might be a different way of communicating.

CONVERSATIONAL STYLE

Men focus on independence, women on intimacy.
Women consult with their partners more and they ask for opinions.
Women follow a conversational statement with a question to elicit more communication.

Women show understanding of other's feelings.
Men talk to get and keep attention.
Men are more comfortable speaking in large groups.
Men talk so they can solve the problem, women feel distanced by advice.
Women talk so they can achieve intimacy.
Women wait for encouragement before they speak.
Men interrupt more often.
Men are concerned with establishing status.
Men talk for information.
Women talk for interaction.

CHILDHOOD LEARNING

Boys
Groups have a leader.
Conversation is to compete for center stage.
Games have winners and losers.
The chief commodity to gain is status.
A problem is only discussed until it is solved.
There is little eye contact during a serious discussion.

Girls
Social life centers around a best friend.
Games are ones in which you take turns.
Secrets prove friendship and confer status.
Most activities have no winners or losers.
Cooperation is encouraged and practiced openly.
Problems are discussed for long periods of time.

THE IMPORTANT THING TO UNDERSTAND IS THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN THE WAY PEOPLE COMMUNICATE. THE MORE AWARE YOU ARE OF THE DIFFERENCES AND THE MORE WILLING TO ADAPT YOUR PERSONAL STYLE TO ACCOMMODATE THOSE DIFFERENCES, THE MORE LIKELY YOU WILL BE TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX.

Title of source for Communication/Men and Women: Deborah Tannen Ph.D., *You Just Don't Understand*.

ASSERTIVENESS

The use of good assertive skills in finding and keeping a job can make a tremendous difference in how successful you are. People often confuse assertion with aggression, but there is a tremendous difference. Using aggression in the work place too often is likely to result in your being fired. Being too passive is likely to result in your not being promoted or possible again being fired.

PASSIVE

A passive person does not state what they want. They accept what happens to them without protest even when what is happening is unfair or disadvantageous. They don't speak their mind or initiate activities. They wait to see if people will hand them what they want without asking for it. The problem with this type of behavior is that their needs and wants go unnoticed. You cannot get what you want if you don't ask for it. In a work situation, if you never tell anyone what a good job you are doing, they won't notice. If you never state your objection to poor working conditions, they will never be remedied.

AGGRESSIVE

Aggressiveness involves acting against others in a way that hurts them and minimized their worth as people. You enhance yourself at the expense of another person. Standing up for yourself in a way that violates the rights of others is aggressive, as is inflicting deliberate hurt. People do not like aggressive people. They fear being hurt or devalued. Though aggression may get you what you want now, it won't last. When people are uncomfortable around other people, they avoid them. There is also a natural desire to thwart an aggressive person. Sooner or later, aggression no longer works.

ASSERTIVE

When you are assertive, you make your own choices. You stand up for yourself appropriately and have an active orientation toward life. Assertive people don't sit around and wait to be given what they want, they go after it. Standing up for your legitimate rights in a way that does not violate the rights of others is assertive. In the process you may hurt someone, but that is not your intent.

ASSERTIVE BENEFITS

You can learn to say no without feeling guilty--------YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT

You can express active disagreement respectfully-----YOUR VIEWS ARE HEARD

You can be persistent---------------YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT

You can speak up for your rights without getting hostile------YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT

You do not have to justify every opinion you have--------YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO YOUR VALUES

You can make your own choices-----------YOU FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF

You lead an active life--------------YOU CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY

CONFRONTIVE ASSERTION

In a situation where you need to state your dislike of a situation or behavior, you can assert yourself to initiate a change.

Start with a statement concerning the specific behavior you would like to see changed.

When you come home this late........

Go on with a statement about your feelings in this situation.

I feel angry and sad...........

Continue with a description of the change you would like to see take place.

In the future if you are going to be late, I would like you to call me.............

The last statement is an outcome - positive or negative - that will happen if they don't act to change the situation.
If you would call me when you are going to be late, I could easily save your dinner..........

BROKEN RECORD

Another way to instigate change in a situation is to keep repeating what you want.

Example: In a restaurant.........I don't think this meal is properly cooked and I want a new dinner or my money back.

Keep repeating this statement until you feel satisfied about the outcome.

CAUTION: COMMUNICATION DOES NOT SOLVE ALL SITUATIONS. ASSERTIVENESS DOES NOT SOLVE, NOR IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR, ALL SITUATIONS. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT IS BETTER NOT TO BE ASSERTIVE. YOU MUST EVALUATE EACH SITUATION TO SEE IF THIS IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO YOU TO RISK BEING ASSERTIVE. THERE CAN BE RISKS. SOME PEOPLE MAY FEEL THREATENED BY ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION AND THE CONSEQUENCES COULD BE NEGATIVE.

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES YOU CAN USE TO ASSERT YOURSELF. NONE OF THEM WILL FEEL NATURAL AT FIRST. ALL OF THEM REQUIRE PRACTICE AND MONITORING OF THE INTERCHANGE. AT THE END OF THIS MANUAL THERE IS A LIST OF RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. READING A BOOK ON ASSERTIVENESS AND PRACTICING WHAT YOU LEARN WILL HELP. PRACTICING WITH A COUNSELOR, FRIEND, OR FAMILY MEMBER IS AN EXCELLENT WAY TO LEARN ASSERTION.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Anger management and assertiveness go hand-in-hand. You cannot be assertive if you cannot manage your anger. Likewise, you cannot manage your anger without using assertive skills.

There are many situations in which anger may be a problem. Anger that goes on too long or occurs too frequently can have negative effects on your health and relationships. Anger that is too strong is hard to control and often results in damage to relationships.

It's important to evaluate your anger and what you do with it. Do you use anger as a clue that there is something you need to fix? Or do you allow your anger to fester and block your happiness? Anger is a valuable emotion. It lets you know that there is a problem you need to address. As such it can be a valuable catalyst for change leading to personal growth. Don't avoid your anger, let it teach you something.

Anger is a reaction to stress. There are stressors in every area of life. Whether the anger has to do with personal or work relationships or some other area of activity, it's important to learn to deal with it in a constructive way.

Anger escalates according to the messages you give yourself. Emotions do not arise in full intensity as a reaction to a situation. The situation happens, then we think about what happened, then the emotion either dies down or escalates.

EVENT..........THOUGHT ABOUT THE EVENT.........EMOTIONAL REACTION

You can learn to control your anger. Like communicating effectively, it is a learned skill. One of the most important factors in anger management is to react to the anger as soon as you feel in control and able to do so. The longer you wait to act, the longer you have to feed those angry feelings. The anger tends to escalate rather than go away if you are thinking about why you are so angry. Often what starts out as a minor annoyance becomes a full-blown anger reaction after a period of time.

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SHEETS TO START TO UNDERSTAND YOUR ANGER AND THE WAYS YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR REACTIONS TO ANGER.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR ANGER

ANGER
RESUME

Anger is a normal, human emotion. It is intense. Everyone gets angry and has a right to his/her anger. The trick is managing your anger effectively so that it will mobilize you in POSITIVE, not negative, directions.

The first step in **ANGER MANAGEMENT** is to get to know your anger by recognizing its symptoms.

DO YOU . . .

physical

__ grit your teeth?
__ get a headache?
__ get sweaty palms?
__ get dizzy?
__ get red-faced?
__ get a stomachache?
__ ____________________
__ ____________________

emotional

__ feel like running away?
__ get depressed?
__ feel guilty?
__ feel resentment?
__ become anxious?
__ feel like lashing out?
__ ____________________
__ ____________________

behavioral

__ cry/yell/scream?
__ use substances?
__ get sarcastic?
__ lose sense of humor?
__ become abusive?
__ withdraw?
__ ____________________
__ ____________________

DOES YOUR ANGER . . .

__ last too long?
__ become too intense?
__ lead to aggression?
__ impair relationships?
__ interfere with major roles? (parent, worker, student)
__ creep out in mysterious ways?
__ contribute to physical problems?
__ come too frequently?
__ flare up too quickly?
__ ____________________
__ ____________________
__ ____________________

ANGER INVENTORY [Rate 1-5] Rank your anger in the following situations.

1-no annoyance	2-little irritated	3-upset	4-quite angry	5-very angry

__ You've overheard people joking about you or your family.
__ You're not being treated with respect or consideration.
__ You're singled out for corrections while the actions of others go unnoticed.
__ You're hounded by a salesperson from the moment you walk into a store.
__ You're trying to discuss something important with someone, who isn't giving you a chance to talk or express your feelings.
__ Someone offers continual, unsolicited advice.
__ You're in a discussion with someone who persists in arguing about a topic s/he knows very little about.
__ You've had a busy day and the person you live with greets you with complaints about what you haven't finished.
__ Someone is given special consideration because of his/her popularity, good looks, financial position, or family status.
__ Someone comments on your being overweight/underweight.
__ **TOTAL**

Additional situations that spark YOUR anger.

____
____
____

...perhaps it's time to work on your anger management skills!

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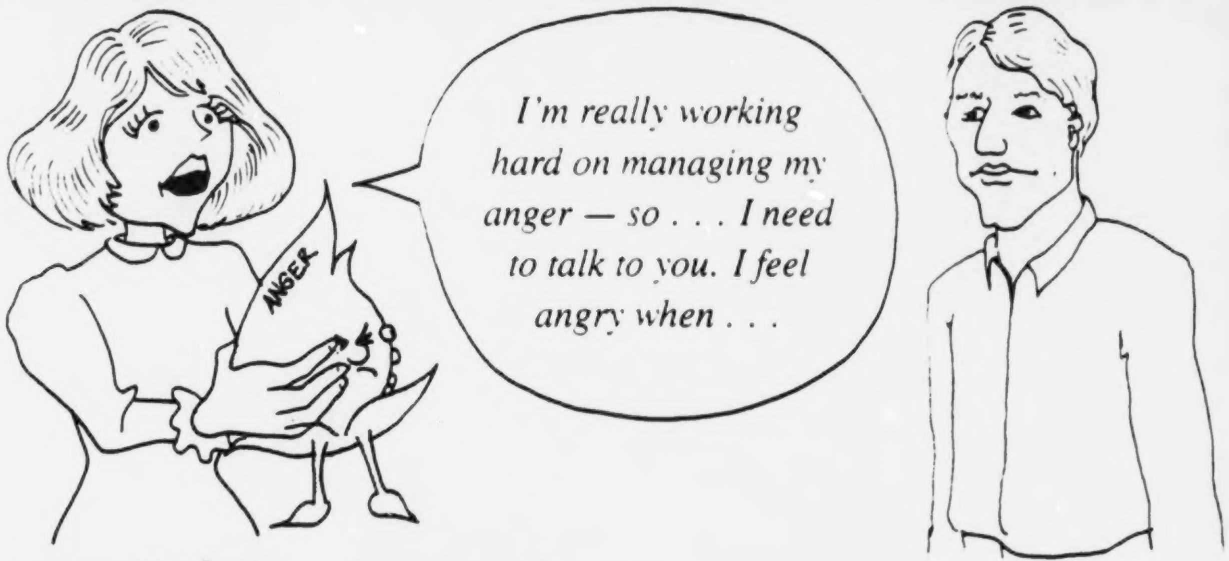
ANGER STYLES

☐ STUFFING ☐ ESCALATING ☑ MANAGING I


ANGER
I'm really working hard on managing my anger — so . . . I need to talk to you. I feel angry when . . .

Do you "manage" your anger?______

Do you allow anger to mobilize you in positive directions? ______

OPEN, HONEST AND DIRECT EXPRESSION is the most effective way of managing anger. Easier said than done, huh? When expressing anger directly, keep these important skills in mind . . .

- Remind yourself that anger is a normal, human emotion — it's OK to feel angry!
- Before *open, honest and direct expression*, evaluate the following —
  What was the trigger event? Is this good timing for the listener?
- Set a specific time limit for anger discussion.
- Remember your body language —
  firm voice — moderate tone — direct eye contact —
  maintain personal "space" — establish an even eye level with the listener
- Don't attack or blame the person.
- Focus on the specific behavior that triggered your anger.
- Avoid *black and white* thinking. ("You never . . . ").
  Instead, "I'd prefer that . . . . then I would feel . . . "
- Use "I" statements.
  "I" feel angry when . . . " "I" feel angry that . . . "
- Avoid statements/actions that you'll regret later.
- Don't drag in old issues now.
- Check for possible compromises.
- After *open, honest and direct expression*, close the discussion, and then move on!
- ________________________________
- ________________________________
- ________________________________
- When it's over, pat yourself on the back for your assertiveness!
- Say to yourself "I (and perhaps the people around me) will be better off in the long run!"

NOW say to yourself —

"By managing my anger I took an important step in improving my sense of well-being!"

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ANGER STYLES

☑ **STUFFING** ☐ **ESCALATING** ☐ **MANAGING**

Do you "stuff" your anger? ______

Do you tend to avoid direct confrontation? ______

"Stuffers" can deny anger...

they may not admit to themselves or to others that they are angry

"Stuffers" may not be aware that they have the right to be angry.

Some reasons we "stuff" are:

1] fear of hurting/offending someone. ☐

2] fear of being disliked or rejected. ☐

3] fear of losing control. ☐

4] feeling it's inappropriate (not ok) to be angry. ☐

5] feeling unable to cope with such a strong, intense emotion. ☐

6] fear of damaging/losing a relationship. ☐

7] it's a learned behavior (but, it can be unlearned!). ☐

8] trying to use a different style than the one I was raised with. ☐

9] ______________________________

10] ______________________________

Consequences/Problems:

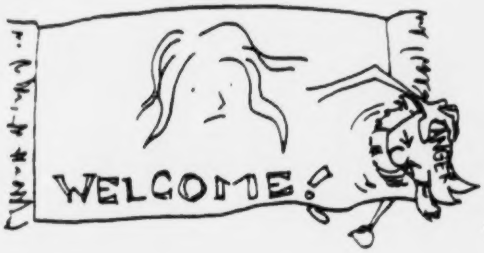
1] anger comes out — regardless.

2] impairs relationships.

3] compromises physical and mental health.

4] ______________________________

5] ______________________________



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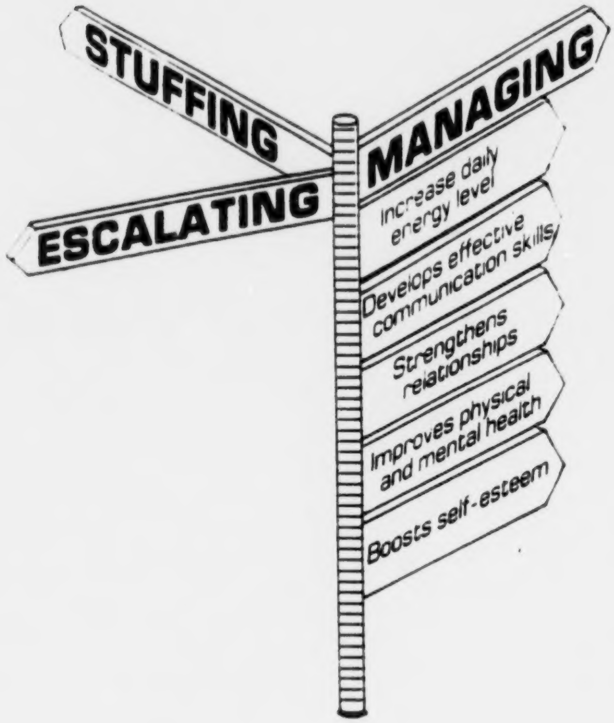
ANGER STYLES

☐ **STUFFING** ☐ **ESCALATING** ☑ **MANAGING II**

Do you "manage" your anger? ______

Do you allow anger to mobilize you in positive directions? ______

OPEN, HONEST AND DIRECT EXPRESSION is the most effective way of managing anger.
(see Anger Styles - Managing I)


STUFFING
ESCALATING
MANAGING
Increase daily energy level
Develops effective communication skills
Strengthens relationships
Improves physical and mental health
Boosts self-esteem

Additional effective anger management techniques are:

1] choosing constructive (not destructive) methods/ solutions/ideas.
   A. Trying physical outlets.
      e.g. exercise, housework, crafts, etc.
      ____
   B. Problem solving and coming up with action plans.
      e.g. forming a neighborhood watch to combat vandalism.
      ____

2] involving an objective third party.
Ask someone you trust to be a sounding board.
Who might this be? ______________________

3] using the "empty chair" exercise.
Pretend you're sitting across from the person you're angry with and say what's on your mind.
Who is that person? ______________________

4] writing a letter to the person you're angry with.
You could describe your anger right now, at the time of the anger event or both. You can destroy it/you can save it/you can mail it at a later date.

5] using relaxation techniques.
Guided imagery.
Self-help tapes.
Music.
____

6] using positive self-talk.
"I am able to choose my anger style."
"I am angry but I'm not going to let it ________
______________________."

7] working towards anger resolution through acceptance (learning to live with the fact that certain people and situations, past, present & future, will not change).
Make realistic expectations:
What is one frustrating anger situation? ________
____

Can it really change as you'd like it to in the near future?
☐ Yes ☐ No

If not...
- realize the powerlessness over the situation.
- give yourself a time limit to be angry, and then... let it go... !
- constantly remind yourself "I cannot afford to stay angry. What's at stake here?"
- recognize the need for forgiveness. "No painful event is allowed to contribute to my anger more than one time."
- focus on the present.

8] ______________________
____
____
____

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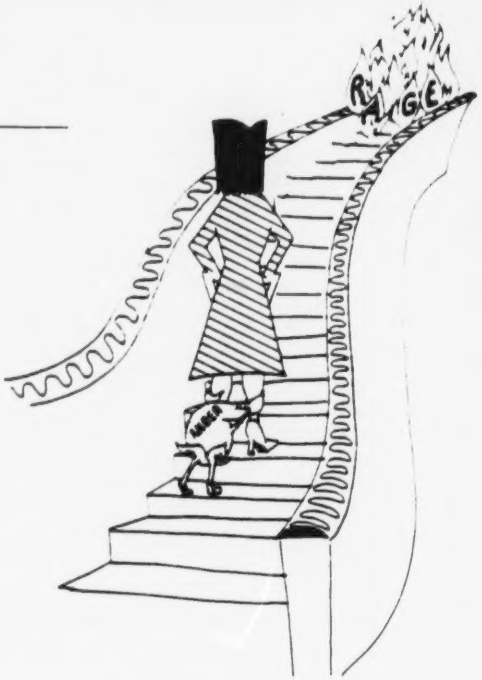
ANGER STYLES

☐ **STUFFING** ☑ **ESCALATING** ☐ **MANAGING**

Do you "escalate" to rage? ______

Do you try to control, but lose control? ______

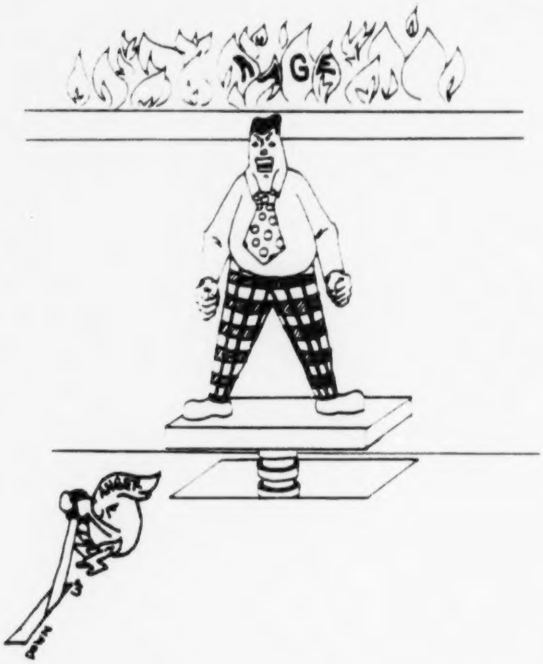


"Escalators" blame and shame the "provoker".

"Escalating" often leads to abusive situations.

Some reasons we escalate are:

1] feeling "I have no other choice". ☐
2] to demonstrate an image of strength/power. ☐
3] to avoid expressing underlying emotions. ☐
4] fear of getting close to someone. ☐
5] it's a learned behavior (but, it can be unlearned!). ☐
6] lack of communication skills. ☐
7] ______________________________
8] ______________________________



Consequences/Problems:

1] desired results may be short-term.
2] possible physical destruction.
3] impairs relationships.
4] compromises physical and mental health.
5] legal ramifications.
6] ______________________________
7] ______________________________

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ANGER DIARY

DATE & TIME	
FIRST SYMPTOM(S):	
WHAT TRIGGERED YOUR ANGER RESPONSE?	
YOUR RESPONSE:	
+ / –	
WHAT WAS SOMETHING YOU DID WELL IN THIS SITUATION?	
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO IN THE FUTURE TO BETTER MANAGE YOUR ANGER? WHAT?	

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PREPARING FOR A SITUATION THAT YOU BELIEVE WILL RESULT IN ANGRY FEELINGS

PREPARING FOR PROVOCATION

This is going to upset me, but I know how to deal with it.
What is it that I have to do?
I can work out a plan to handle this.
Remember, stick to the issues and don't take it personally.
I can manage the situation, I know how to regulate my anger.
If I find myself getting upset, I'll know what to do.
There won't be any need for an argument.
Try not to take this too seriously.
This could be a testing situation, but I believe in myself.
Time for a few deep breaths of relaxation. Feel comfortable, relaxed and at ease.
Easy does it. Remember to keep your sense of humor.

IMPACT AND CONFRONTATION

Stay calm. Just continue to relax.
As long as I keep my cool, I'm in control.
Just roll with the punches; don't get bent out of shape.
Think of what you want to get out of this.
You don't need to prove yourself.
There is no point in getting mad.
Don't make more out of this than you have to.
I'm not going to let him get to me.
Look for the positives. Don't assume the worst or jump to conclusions.
It's really a shame that she has to act like this.
For someone to be that irritable , he must be awfully unhappy.
If I start to get mad, I'll just be banging my head against the wall.
So I might as well just relax. There is no need to doubt myself.
What he says doesn't matter. I'm on top of this situation and it's under control.

COPING WITH AROUSAL

My muscles are starting to feel tight. Time to relax and slow things down.
Getting upset won't help.
It's just not worth it to get so angry.
I'll let him make a fool of himself.
I have a right to be annoyed, but let's keep the lid on.
Time to take a deep breath.
Let's take the issue point by point.
My anger is a signal of what I need to do. Time to instruct myself.
I'm not going to get pushed around, but I'm not going haywire either.
Try to reason it out. Treat each other with respect.
Let's try a cooperative approach. Maybe we both are right.

Negatives lead to more negatives. Work constructively.
She'd probably like me to get really angry. Well, I'm going to disappoint her.
I can't expect people to act the way I want them to.
Take it easy, don't get pushy.

REFLECTING ON THE PROVOCATION

WHEN CONFLICT IS UNRESOLVED

Forget about the aggravation. Thinking about it only makes you upset.
These are difficult situations and they take time to straighten out.
Try to shake it off. Don't let it interfere with your job.
I'll get better at this as I get more practice.
Remember relaxation. It's a lot better than anger.
Can you laugh about it? It's probably not so serious.
Don't take it personally.
Take a deep breath and think positive thoughts.

WHEN CONFLICT IS RESOLVED OR COPING IS SUCCESSFUL

I handled that one pretty well. It worked!
That wasn't as hard as I thought.
It could have been a lot worse.
I could have gotten more upset than it was worth.
I actually got through that without getting angry.
When I don't take things too seriously, I'm better off.
I guess I've been getting upset for too long when it wasn't even necessary.
I'm doing better at this all the time.

Title of source for Preparing for a situation that you believe will result in angry feelings: Power Communication Skills, author unknown.

IMPROVING SELF-CONCEPT

THE CONSCIOUS SELF AND SELF-CONCEPT

The conscious self includes all of those relatively conscious experiences that we believe have something to do with who we are. It includes memories of our successes and failures, our appearance, our fantasies, our beliefs and values, our behaviors and our beliefs feeling about those behaviors. It also refers to those things in the world we identify with. Our continuing sense of personal identity is one of the mental concepts comprising the conscious self. Another is the self-concept, our beliefs about who we are.

Self-concept is illustrated by the way we describe ourselves. This includes our feelings, moods and other characteristics. People often emphasize what is most unusual about themselves.

Whether or not we are consistent in reality, we view ourselves as a consistent whole. Our behavior may change, but our self-concept remains intact. If this sense of consistency is compromised, we lose our personality and perhaps our sanity. Images that conflict with our self-concept are distorted or reinterpreted to reduce the apparent difference. In most things we strive to behave in a manner consistent with what we believe about ourselves.

The negative side of self-concept is that we may become locked in to one way of behaving even when it is maladaptive. This tends to reduce flexibility an spontaneity. Most of the time we have choices about how to behave, but our self-concept can limit those choices.

Because the self-concept is an interpretation of experience rather than the experience itself, it will always represent a simplification and maybe a distortion of what we really are. Moreover, it is a simplification of what we were rather than what we are now.

Much of our self-concept is formed from observing ourselves and this is fairly straightforward except where we distort the facts. Some potentially negative impact can result when we internalize statements from others. For example, in moments of irritability, a mother may state "you're totally irresponsible just like your father". Such definitions act like hypnotic suggestions, gradually bringing about long-term changes in behavior and what we think about ourselves.

Self-concept resists change since it restricts what behaviors will be permitted. The individual may not attempt new behaviors that would allow the images to be modified. Slight inaccuracies in the way people frame statements about themselves may help perpetuate a bad situation. For example, a person may say "I am shy" rather than "In the past I have behaved in a shy manner". One explanation allows for change while the other makes change seem unlikely.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR SELF-CONCEPT

If it so difficult to change the self-concept, how do you do that when the necessity for change is clear? The key to changing the self-concept in a more positive direction is to re-program the messages you give yourself. You can change your feelings and beliefs about yourself if you change the messages.

For example: You have gone on five job interviews in the past two months. So far you haven't heard anything from any of them and your confidence is very low. Your self-concept (playing back tapes from your childhood) says that you are not good at talking to people. The lack of response to your job interviews seems to suggest that your self-concept is correct.

On the other hand, unnoticed by you, major changes have been taking place in your ability to talk about your skills and abilities. You have learned so much from all these interviews, you now present yourself in a believable and professional way. The very next interview (if you find the nerve to go through with it), will result in a job offer.

Instead of telling yourself you can't do this, you can tell yourself frequently that you are getting very good at this. You are learning how to do this and finding it's not as hard as you thought it would be. Eventually, your self-concept will catch up to this new idea of who you are.

YOU MUST GIVE YOURSELF CREDIT FOR YOUR SUCCESSES. REWARD YOURSELF. CELEBRATE YOUR ACHIEVEMENT EACH STEP OF THE WAY.

You can change your self-confidence and the way you view yourself by:

1. Refusing to give in to those negative thoughts about yourself, your ability or the task at hand.
2. Remind yourself of your past successes. If I can do that..... I can certainly do this.
3. Forgive yourself for making mistakes. Mistakes are an essential part of learning. Learn from them, use mistakes

as opportunities to become better at the task.

4. Remember that it is not necessary for everyone to admire or like you. In fact, it is impossible that everyone would like you. The most important thing is that you like yourself.
5. Visualize what it will be like once you have achieved this goal. Visualization is the first step to realizing your dreams. Daydream about overcoming the obstacles that present themselves.
6. Reward yourself as you progress toward your goal. Celebrate each step of the way. You've completed your first job interview, hurray, do something you really enjoy to celebrate.
7. Keep going. What successful people do that unsuccessful people don't do, is to continue on. They make just as many mistakes, they just don't let the mistakes stop them.
8. Own up to your own feelings and behavior. No benefit will come from all this learning if you don't acknowledge that it is your learning that is taking place.

LOCATING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Each community is individual in the quantity and type of resources it offers. However, each community does offer some combination of resources that you can access. It certainly isn't only financial help that is available. Assistance with job seeking skills, job placement, and finding job openings can prove invaluable in your job search. There are many agencies that help with specific problems that may be blocking you in your search for work. For instance, if you have been hired for a job but it's in Denver and you can't afford to move, AEOA administers a relocation loan fund to help with moving costs. Maybe you cannot take offered employment because you don't have a vehicle to get there, the Department of Rehabilitation Services may be able to help you with that.

The best place to start looking for resources is the phone book. Try checking under Social Service Organizations in the yellow pages. Or call Information and Referral if you live in St. Louis or Lake counties. If you are already receiving services from the Department of Rehabilitation Services or another agency, they can direct you to further services you may need. Your local library is another source of referral information. Ask the librarian to help you locate agency phone numbers for your area.

Other local agencies such as the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency are excellent sources of information. They have a broad variety of programs such as vocational evaluation, Job Club, Lives in Transition, Job Placement program, etc. The Minnesota Department of Jobs and Training is another excellent source of job information and referrals.

Part of being your own self-advocate is learning how to access the help you need in order to be successful. It's a sign of strength, not weakness, to know when and how to access services. Part of your support network is the people you know on a personal basis, friends, family members and members of groups to which you belong. The other part of your support network consists of people in the community who can offer assistance as needed. Following is a partial list of agencies in the Virginia, Minnesota area. Wherever you live, you can look up these agencies or similar ones for your area.

Center for Independent Living

Lutheran Social Services

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

ARC Chapter

St. Louis County Social Services

Range Mental Health Center

Sexual Assault Program

Arrowhead Center on Problem Drinking

Iron Range Rehabilitation Center

Regional Services for Hearing Impaired

Ministerial Association

Lighthouse for the Blind (Duluth, MN)

Planned Parenthood

Bethany Range Crisis Center

State Services for the Blind

Division of Rehabilitation Services

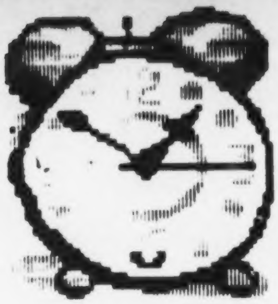
Northeast MN Office of Jobs and Training

MN Department of Jobs and Training

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency

Range Center, Inc.

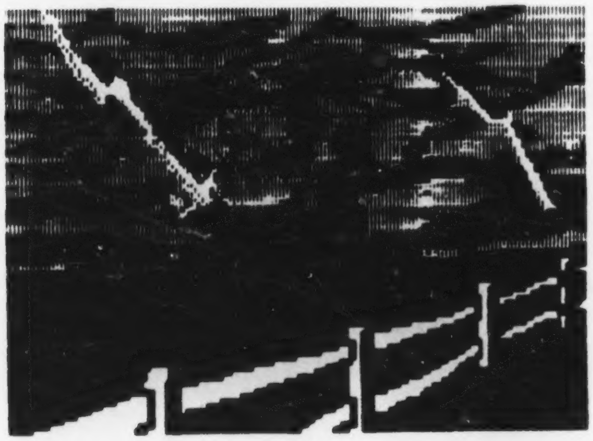
Dial-A-Ride



TIME MANAGEMENT

AND

COPING WITH STRESS



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TIME for TIPS & TIPS for TIME

Review the following list and choose the tips that fit your particular time management needs! Remember to design an individualized time management system that fits your personality, so it will be more effective for you!

1. Be realistic with yourself regarding how much you can actually accomplish in a given time period.

____

2. Realize that all tasks are not equally important and set priorities on a daily, weekly and/or monthly basis.

____

3. Fine-tune your ability to say "NO" to additional responsibilities that infringe on your personal, work, and/or leisure time.

____

4. Be aware of your peak energy periods and plan to do activities, which require a high level of concentration and performance, during those times.

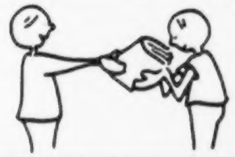
____

5. Ask yourself "What's the best use of my time right now?" and focus on that particular activity.

____

6. Remember that striving for perfection takes time and usually isn't necessary. Complete tasks well enough to get the results you really need.

____



7. Realize that many tasks/responsibilities can be delegated to others. Be sure to communicate your expectations clearly.

____

8. Make basic decisions quickly to save energy for the more important and difficult decisions.

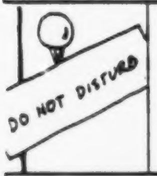
____

9. Approach overwhelming responsibilities with a positive attitude, and learn to break large tasks into small, achievable ones.

____

10. Make use of "waiting" time, by having small, uncomplicated tasks/activities to do... or simply plan to enjoy this time and relax.

____



11. Request uninterruptible time whenever needed to achieve goals. Take control of your environment at home and/or work to establish a conducive place for task involvement and completion.

____

12. Set goals and reward yourself when you've accomplished them.

____

13. Always remind yourself of the benefits you'll derive from task completion.

____

14. Free time, leisure activities, and exercise need to be scheduled/prioritized, as well as work activities.

____

Circle three "tips for time" that you can incorporate into your individualized time management system:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

GOAL **Write one goal which needs attention now:** ____________________

____

A balanced lifestyle is a positive outcome of effective time management.

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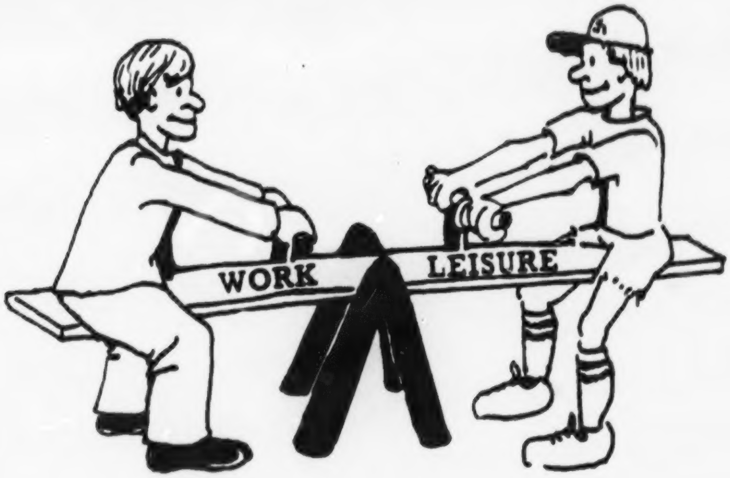
WORK•LEISURE BALANCE



List 1, 2, or 3 of your WORK activities:

1) ______________________________

2) ______________________________

3) ______________________________

List 1, 2, or 3 of your LEISURE activities:

1) ______________________________

2) ______________________________

3) ______________________________

WORK ACTIVITIES			Check (✓) which activities satisfy your…	LEISURE ACTIVITIES		
1	2	3		1	2	3
			need to be with others?			
			need for intellectual stimulation?			
			need to be outdoors?			
			need to be respected?			
			need for a structured lifestyle?			
			need for money?			
			need for social life and/or friends and/or family?			
			need for laughter and/or play?			
			need for privacy and/or quiet?			
			need to express yourself?			
			need to maintain adequate physical health?			
			need to feel competent?			
			need to be creative and/or artistic?			
			need for independence?			

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DO ANY OF THESE STRESSORS "HIT HOME"?

Day-to-day life has countless stressors. Identifying even the smallest irritant, as well as major life stressors, assists us in recognizing the amount of stress we actually encounter ... and the VALUE of coping skills.

Stressors have a cumulative effect and can have unhealthy consequences relating to personal health, relationships, and all other life areas.

Check (✓) below the stressors you've experienced in the last few months.

- ☐ Your alarm clock not going off.
- ☐ Your favorite sports team losing.
- ☐ A recent illness.
- ☐ Dealing with bureaucracy/red-tape.
- ☐ A divorce.
- ☐ Losing a friend's long-distance phone number.
- ☐ Working with incompetent people.
- ☐ Not being able to find a kleenex... and needing it!
- ☐ Birth of a child.
- ☐ Being late on a deadline.
- ☐ Hearing disparaging comments about a minority.
- ☐ In-law problems.
- ☐ Spouse being under stress.
- ☐ Recent death of someone close to you.
- ☐ Having difficulty motivating yourself.
- ☐ Losing a game.
- ☐ Wanting to eat, but on a diet.
- ☐ Having only cold water for a bath.
- ☐ Spouse late coming home.
- ☐ Not being able to find the car keys.
- ☐ Anxiously awaiting a phone call.
- ☐ Late paying a bill.
- ☐ Someone telling you what to do.
- ☐ Moving to a new city.
- ☐ Not enough time for yourself.
- ☐ Having an empty gas tank and being in a rush.
- ☐ Sexual problems.
- ☐ Threat of war.
- ☐ Planning a large event.
- ☐ Being in trouble with the law.
- ☐ Anniversary of a beloved's death.
- ☐ Not having enough money to pay the bills.
- ☐ Parents treating you like a child.
- ☐ A new job.
- ☐ Someone telling you how to feel.
- ☐ Inability to conceive a child.
- ☐ Having no money and not wanting to borrow.
- ☐ Arguing with a good friend or relative.
- ☐ Out-of-town relatives staying with you.
- ☐ Spouse being too dependent on you.
- ☐ Seeing signs of aging in the mirror.
- ☐ Unwanted pregnancy.
- ☐ Not feeling well and not knowing why.
- ☐ Best friend asking to borrow money.
- ☐ An appliance/machine not working.
- ☐ Too much to do, not enough time.
- ☐ Someone canceling plans one-half hour before.
- ☐ Moving to a new house or apartment.
- ☐ Good friend feeling depressed.
- ☐ Someone telling you how to drive.
- ☐ Job interview.
- ☐ Boss putting pressure on you.
- ☐ Saying "yes" to too many things.
- ☐ Waiting in a long line.
- ☐ Being charged too much money.
- ☐ Electricity going out.
- ☐ Children not taking responsibility for themselves.
- ☐ ______________________________
- ☐ ______________________________
- ☐ ______________________________

These stressors may not change, however your ability to "cope" with them CAN change!

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ANNOYANCES STRESS IRRITANTS HASSLES
PEEVES ANNOYANCES

Don't sweat the "SMALL STUFF"

HASSLES IRRITANTS PEEVES STRESS

- Stressors come in all sizes and all forms . . .
  some are major life events . . .
  but MANY are everyday hassles . . .
  or . . . "small stuff".
- Effective coping skills can help to put these in perspective.

HASSLE / EXPERIENCE	MY REACTION	POSSIBLE COPING SKILLS
1.		
2.		
3.		

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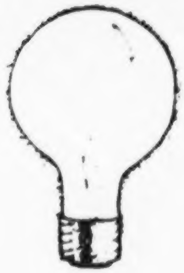
Depressed ? ?
Feeling Blue ? ? ? ?
What Can I Do ? ? ? ? ? ?



Which do you imagine yourself doing when you need to cope?

ASSERTING MYSELF	or	CONTACTING ONE OF MY SUPPORTS
CHANGING A HABIT	or	HELPING SOMEONE
GOING SHOPPING	or	LISTENING TO FAVORITE MUSIC
EATING SOMETHING HEALTHY	or	EXERCISING
TAKING A TRIP	or	TAKING A BREAK
LEARNING SOMETHING NEW	or	GOING TO A MOVIE
WRITING A LETTER OR IN A JOURNAL	or	READING A BOOK/MAGAZINE
TAKING A WALK	or	TALKING TO A FRIEND
TAKING A HOT BATH/SHOWER	or	LAUGHING/CRYING

Recognizing the importance of these valuable tools is the first step in establishing coping skills. The next step is exercising these skills when feeling depressed, to increase your sense of well-being!

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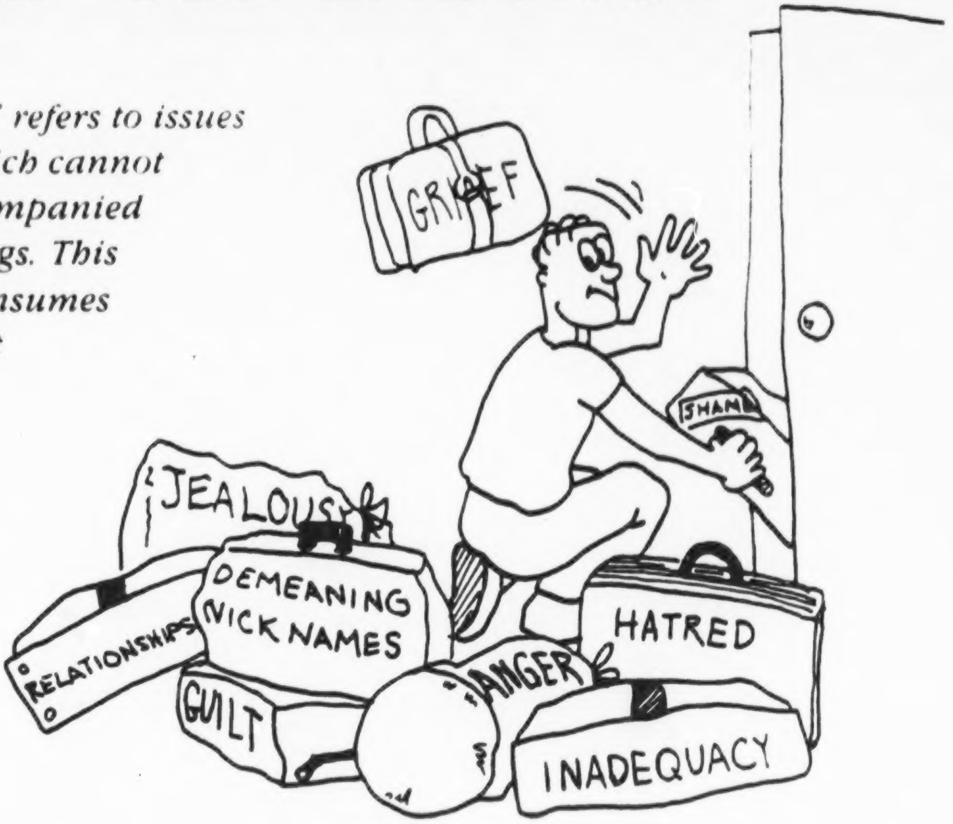
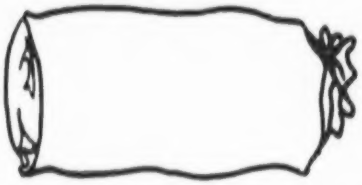
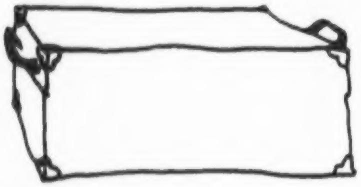
TOSSING that "OLD BAGGAGE"

"OLD BAGGAGE" refers to issues from the past which cannot be changed, accompanied by residual feelings. This "old baggage" consumes energy that might otherwise be used for self-improvement.


GRIEF
SHAME
JEALOUSY
DEMEANING NICK NAMES
RELATIONSHIPS
HATRED
ANGER
GUILT
INADEQUACY

1) Specifically, write in your "old baggage" issues:





2) What is preventing you from getting rid of this "old baggage"?

3) What are some ways you can resolve these past issues?

4) What will you do with this extra energy after you've *tossed* your "old baggage"?

Acknowledge EVERY Effort Towards Your Personal Growth!

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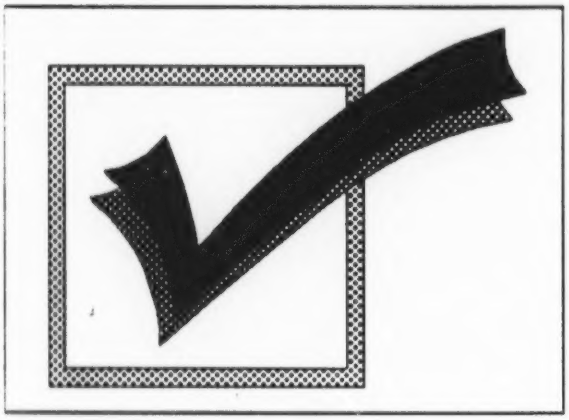
SURVIVAL ON THE JOB



HOW TO EARN HIGH MARKS FROM YOUR EMPLOYER

SURVIVAL IN THE WORKPLACE OF THE 90's

by John Parsons M.S.
EAP Counselor

The Elements of Survival

Congratulations! You did all of your labor market research, networked with friends, relatives, neighbors, conducted numerous (not to mention outstanding) informational interviews to identify your ideal work environment, and secured an actual job interview which resulted in your new employment. Yikes!! Now what? That's right--go to work!! While you may think the only emotions a newly hired employee might feel would be positive, many enter a new work setting with a mix of feelings--excitement, curiosity, anxiety, insecurity, confidence, pride--just to mention a few. All those feelings are justified and normal. From the very first day on, employees are judged, yes judged and measured by their performance. You will enter a proving ground and there is much to survive:

> the job and the tasks within
> your co-workers
> attaining job security / surviving possible layoff
> promotions
> job performance reviews

Sound like you've got your hands full? You certainly do have much to contend with, but take heart. This is all very doable, especially if you adopt a positive attitude and keep a few things in mind. Let's talk.

Before going any further it is important to talk about a positive attitude. A winning attitude that will help to keep you employed, now that you've secured a job for yourself. Keep in mind that prior to hiring you, your new employer had a problem--the vacancy. You represent a solution, an answer to his/her problems (and possibly prayers). My point is that you need to continue to represent a solution, not a problem to your employer. The moment an employee becomes part of the problem rather than part of the solution, employers think in terms of liabilities instead of assets.

THE JOB

The basic understanding of one's job and job duties rests within the written job description and the verbal understanding between you and your employer/supervisor. These two elements are critical. Thoroughly read and understand your job description--line by line. Why, you ask? You may be held accountable for the tasks specified therein at the time of your performance evaluation (most new hires have a probationary period they need to survive). As you go through your job description, write questions down for your supervisor if you're confused by any of the listed duties. Seek clarification - for that is, in part, the premise of your employer's performance expectations of you!

Once you thoroughly understand your job and the duties involved, your next responsibility is to perform them to the best of your ability every single work day. Expect to make mistakes. That's part of the learning curve on a new job. Mistakes should be viewed as opportunities to learn your job and to improve on your performance. If you get confused as you put time in on the job, ask your supervisor or co-worker for the information you need. CAUTION! Do not attempt to just bluff it. It's certainly acceptable to solicit feedback about your performance from a supervisor to make sure you're on the right track. This pertains to new hires as well as veterans.

Another matter related to job survival has to do with stress and burnout. Operationally defined, stress is the body's reaction to various life circumstances. Burnout is the development of an "I don't care" or "What I do doesn't really matter" attitude. These are factors that come into play usually with fairly long-term or experienced employees. Unrelenting stress frequently leads to burn-out. It is a democratic affliction, for it can strike anyone, at any level, at any time, and in any occupation. Here I want to present two concepts: Prevention and early intervention. Preventing burnout from occurring in the first place and intervening at the first sign of burn out is crucial. Why? People who ignore the symptoms of burnout risk losing the job they might have worked so hard to obtain, either through resignation or outright termination. This is a costly experience for business. The annual U.S.tab is in the neighborhood of 200 billion in lost productivity, absenteeism and direct medical and insurance costs!!

Reducing stress and burnout involves multiple steps. First, be able to recognize it. On the next page is a list of possible burnout symptoms:

1. You discover that you're putting in a lot of effort but accomplishing less.
2. Feelings of depression for no apparent reason.
3. A sense that you have no fun in your life. It's nearly all work and little play.
4. You tire easily, and feel exhausted.
5. You spend less time with friends, neighbors, family.
6. You become aware of chronic, nagging physical problems, such as headaches, ulcers, stomach upset, intestinal discomfort, etc...
7. Your fuse seems shorter, and you are more critical with the people around you.
8. You may be postponing or neglecting routine tasks, such as writing letters, returning phone calls, or attending to monthly bills.
9. You may be losing interest in primary relationships in your life (i.e., with your spouse or children).

When you find yourself dealing with the downside of your job more than the upside of your job and that goes on for a long time, people can become cynical and it's at this point one should step away and evaluate their lives relative to the workplace. As much as anything, workplace stress is about a feeling or sense of not being in control. An essential feature of establishing control is taking action - moving from the victim to the problem solver mode.

Particularly when you're a new employee, it's very easy to over-work, work more than full-time, take work home, etc... It seems natural enough, given that you are probably trying to develop new skills in this new work environment. It takes time, and like anything else that's new--practice. There may not seem to be enough hours in the work day. That leads many to consider taking work home literally or at least mentally. My recommendation is to leave your work at work. That means paperwork, gossip about work, and front office politics. An awareness of events that are scheduled (i.e., a 7:30 a.m. appointment with a group at the bank or your boss) is critical. And sometimes solutions to sticky work problems come to us in the quiet of our homes. The point we're trying to make is not to permit work to so consume you that the other important aspects of your life get excluded (i.e., spouse, marriage relationship, children, responsibilities around the house, etc...).

CO-WORKERS

There is no getting around it. Most people who work full time spend more time with co-workers than they do with their own families. Co-workers have the potential to cause us a lot of problems, if we allow that to happen. On the other hand, they can do a lot to help us.

It is likely that we have all met individuals in our work experiences that have turned out to be negative, if not outright nasty people. As a young Social Work graduate entering the field of Human Services, I was naive enough to believe that people in "that field" would be different, humanistic, compassionate, sensitive, deep, etc... Within weeks reality struck. There can be bad apples anywhere. On the other hand, the majority of people you work with will probably provide a neutral to positive working experience. Heck! Some people meet, fall in love, and marry one-time co-workers. Others develop some of their closest personal friendships through work. It is important for you as a new employee to sort out who's who at work. Develop those relationships that feel good, and learn to survive those that are difficult. One survival technique is to leave the negative co-workers at work, literally and mentally. Spending time in the evening complaining about negative co-workers is a waste of time. In addition, it is counter-productive to personal work survival in that it likely shortens your long term job/life expectancy. Non-work time is better spent engaged in relaxing activities or leisure pursuits. Turn negative work OFF when at home. Invest in yourself and take care of yourself. You're the only one in the position to do it.

Conflict in the workplace is inevitable and normal. Knowing how to resolve conflict is a critical skill for surviving co-workers. An essential component to resolving conflict is that of assuming and maintaining an appropriate **problem-solving attitude**. A secondary (yet equally important) element is clear, assertive **communication**. The problem-solving attitude is this: Given that we are in this work relationship together, our problem is a mutual problem. Successful and positive resolution then dictates a collaborative solution. The ultimate solution almost always rests in the hands of those who are at the core of whatever the conflict is. Those are the individuals who need to communicate with one another. Little good comes from going to co-workers with complaints about the actions of others. In fact, that often contributes to a higher level of tension, not to mention the deflating effect that behavior has on general morale and motivation. It is also not useful to circumvent the individual you are in conflict with, and bring the troubles to your supervisor. The basics of assertive communication lie in letting the other person know:

1) What behavior they did or didn't do that bothered you.

2) How that behavior impacts either you or the organization (this involves communicating how you feel about the behavior).

3) What you would like from the individual.

4) An expression of confidence in your joint abilities to work this situation through.

While conflict is never easy and is often intensely uncomfortable, there are real durable rewards available to those who learn to handle it successfully. The outcome is well worth the effort!

ATTAINING JOB SECURITY / SURVIVING LAYOFF

Particularly in the 90's, we have all witnessed the layoff of workers in various segments of our national labor force. The automobile industry, steel workers, middle managers, workers in the garment industry, and the list goes on and on.... Who among you hasn't occasionally felt some anxiety associated with this topic? Will I be next? The sense of uncertainty can be difficult to cope with if you're in a position where you're waiting for the "ax to fall". Take heart though, there are some actions you can take to help you attain as much job security as is possible within your given field.

Two very important strategies for obtaining job security are first, being perceived by your employer as part of his/her solution or asset list rather than part of his/her problem or liability list and second, continuing education or the upgrading of your skill level. The implementation of these two components is like buying job insurance. I can virtually guarantee that if your employer recognizes you as an asset to the company and appreciates the skills you bring to the work place, you will be one of the last ones out the door should the business close up shop.

PROMOTIONS

The means by which employees achieve promotions are limited, particularly in these lean times. First however, you will have to have survived all of the other factors identified earlier in this section. This publication is primarily intended to assist you in securing employment, so understandably the information here on promotions will be limited.

The 90's have represented a time of cutbacks and layoffs in the American labor market scene. That doesn't mean that the idea of promotion is defunct, simply that it isn't as commonplace as it was in the 70's and early 80's. Some of the factors affecting this promotional element of America's labor market include the current state of the national economy and the reality of increased global markets and competition. The term "downsizing" has certainly become familiar to nearly anyone who has been watching labor trends here in the U.S. over the last decade. And so with that as a brief background lets proceed.

One of these three conditions must exist for an employee to achieve a promotion:

1) The organization you're working for must increase its number of management level positions through expansion or some other means.

2) A management level position needs to materialize internally by someone resigning, being terminated, retiring, dying, etc...

3) The employee secures a management level position with another organization or employer.

There are two organizational options for promotion. One is with your current employer. A second would involve an entirely different employer. I submit that for promotion to occur with your current employer, you and the work you've done to date must be viewed positively by the existing management staff, board, etc... Your employer will need to recognize you as part of the organization's asset collection--a contributor and part of the solution, rather than part of the problem. The fostering of that specific management attitude toward you and your work is essential, for it creates a climate of trust and confidence which is a mandatory prerequisite for promotion.

When companies recognize value in an employee, they are usually looking for opportunities to reward good performance. What better reinforcement is there for an employee than to grant a promotion? Promotion with an outside employer usually involves conducting an employed job search or an outside employer actively seeking you out. The basic ingredient common to promotion is excellent job performance. If high level performance and skill is demonstrated, opportunities will generally present themselves. While the 90's have been discussed as a time of cutbacks and trimmed budgets, business is still brisk and good workers will always be in demand.

JOB PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Job performance evaluations are generally annual occurrences. Many employees find the process somewhat mysterious. Some would prefer the practice to be abandoned for the anxiety that can accompany the process. Few employees look forward to this yearly ritual with glee. But hold on just a minute though. Let's take a different look at job performance evaluations.

Generally performance evaluations are used to determine whether an employee will be granted a raise and, if so, how much. Evaluations can serve a valuable purpose or simply be a regularly performed, and relatively meaningless exercise. When you get right down to it, performance evaluations are a way to tell an employee how he or she is doing--good, bad, and indifferent. Done in a meaningful way, the evaluation process should operate like a frank exchange of information, ideas and impressions relative to the employees performance over a specified period of time.

When it comes to the issue of frequency, it is the writer's opinion that a year is way too long. People need feedback about their performance more often than annually. If they're doing something right, it's important to reinforce the appropriate behavior. On the other hand, if the employee is having a problem, an evaluation can be used to provide constructive, candid feedback as well as positive, corrective guidance. The schedule can be adjusted for whatever works in a particular business setting.

Historically, the performance evaluation process has been viewed as a means by which the employer gives information to the employee. If permitted, this can also be utilized as a great opportunity to provide your employer with some feedback about his/her supervision of you. Let your boss know what they're doing that has been really helpful. You can also let them know areas where you might be needing a little more from them. Under ideal circumstances, a performance evaluation can be used as a means by which to work on the relationship between you and your supervisor.

Finally, don't be afraid to actually request an evaluation from your supervisor even if it is informal in nature. It can serve as a occasion through which you receive valuable information about how to "stay on course" with your job. In addition, such a request (if approached in the proper way) will probably reflect well how your work attitude is viewed by management. Remember, attitude is the #1 consideration employers take into account when hiring workers. The demonstration of a positive work attitude is important throughout the life of your employment with any employer. It suggests to the employer that you're interested in the work of the business and not just in holding down a job.

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Doubleday and Company
Garden City, NY 11530

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Ready Reference Press
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

I Can Be Anything: Careers and Colleges for Young Women
College Entrance Exam Board
888 7th Avenue
New York, NY 10019

Career Planning
College Survival, Inc.
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